Monday, September 7, 1931, Labor Day

The things are packed ready for the expressman to come to take them to New York. Mother, Lena and I are leaving with the 5:26.

Thank G. my fear that I was getting late summer hayfever turned out to be groundless. It was just an ordinary cold that got me these last few days and I am glad to say I am nearly rid of it by this time.

As I review in my mind these summer months in West End I feel grateful for the little I have accomplished -- the revision of the manuscript of "Judaism as a Civilization," the final touches on the translation of the Mesillot Yesharim, the first draft of an essay on Jewish Dogma, the copying of a little ?p.175 1/3 of the Shir Hashirim Rabba text, the groundwork for a series of talks on a Program of Social Justice, and over 70 pages of this journal. In these distressing times I ought deem myself fortunate that I am free from economic worries and am able to work without interruption.

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Thursday, September 10, 1931

I haven't been feeling particularly well these last few days. It seems that I am suffering from sinus trouble. (Thank goodness this has turned out to be a false alarm. Sept. 17)

Joseph Levy gave me an earful last Tuesday night about the financial impasse into which the SAJ finds itself at present. He was nagging me to approve his coming before the Board with the proposition to send away Eisenstein and to give up the Hebrew School this coming year. Even my offer not to accept any slary -- which would lighten their burden by $4,000 -- was not enough to stop his importuning me.

In the meantime I am continuing my readings in "Social Justice." If the study of civil law of the Talmud were motivated by a desire to get at a clear understanding of the rabbinic conception of social justice, we should undoubtedly have a larger number of our intellectually minded desirous of knowing the Talmud. Take for example the question What constitutes the right of possession to property or to the product of one's labor? All the considerations that enter into p. 176 etc. would throw a great deal of light on the ethical aspect of possession.

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Thursday, September 17, 1931

I am once again passing through a state of inner turmoil on account of the SAJ. The occurrence of the High Holidays early in September has kept away a great many members from the services, or rather furnished them with an excuse for not buying seats in the synagogue. It is not only the country synagogue that is competing with the city synagogue, as far as these people are concerned. The hotels are also entering into competition with the permanent synagogue. As an inducement to people to spend the holidays they are offering religious services free of charge or at a very low rate. What chance has Judaism against all these social and economic forces that are battering away at it incessantly?

As it is the High Holidays have remained the main if not the sole source of support, and now even that is being drained by private enterprise, and the tendency to find the easiest way out of communal responsibility. To take the SAJ as an example. It was hoped that at least $16,000 would be realized on seats (Last year the amount totaled nearly $23,000) and that another few thousand dollars would be assessed on the members. It turned out that they were happy to get in about $12,000. This has accentuated further

the financial difficulties of the organization. With a budget of about $2,000 which had been agreed upon by the Board at the beginning of the summer there was the prospect of raising only $22,000. It was this that gave Joe Levy the brilliant idea of sending away the entire staff including Eisenstein.

While Rosh Hashanah lasted (last Saturday and Sunday) I forgot the financial troubles of the SAJ and was abosrbed in the problem of rendering the services successful. I preached the first day and Eisenstein the second. In my sermon I developed the idea that our ancestors survived periods of upheaval because they interpreted those periods as a negative demonstration of God's working in history, of that working which will be demonstrated affirmatively in the millenium. I found that to be the psychological implication of their belief that the salvation of mankind would be heralded by some universal calamity. The present economic crisis is a reductio ad absurdum of man's law that human happiness derived from egoism. This egoism often defended as rugged individualsim is the antithesis of God's law of cooperation and collectivism as the basis of human happiness. The breakdown of the economic order is the logical consequence of the exorbitant profits which have diminished the buying power of the masses and enlarged the instruments of production and output of goods. This economic system has been made possible through the perversion of leisure, education and religion in the interests of competitive selfishness.

The realization that human life is governed by moral law which cannot be violated with impunity gives to human life that meaning which has the effect of consolation in an era of universal distress like the present. p. 177 I concluded, Jews be true to the spirit which enabled your ancestors to survive the most crucial periods of human history; and have the courage to tell the nations that since God is sovereign, the

world will in the end attain stability. It is then that God will be recognized as judging the nations with equity.

It was a very hot day and I still hadn't recovered from my cold. The doors and the windows of the synagogue were open, and the noise of the street together with that of the ventilator made it very hard for me to speak. The people were impressed with what I said, chiefly, I believe, because of the complete self-abandon with which I spoke. But I was not satisfied with the sermon, because my vocabulary did not correspond in variety and color to the richness of the theme and the depth of my emotions. In addition to the physical difficulties under which I labored there was also the subconscious realization that I was merely filling in a gap in the service of the day, and that before the day would be over what I spoke would be completely forgotten.

The second day Eisenstein delivered the sermon on boredom as a source of unhappiness. He developed the idea I had given to the Seminary students when I met them before the Holidays to give them suggestions for the Holiday sermons. I was happy to see that he spoke very well and made an excellent impression on the audience.

Everything would have run along smoothly if it were not for the financial difficulties which are preventing the few who might have paid some attention to the affairs of the SAJ from taking any active part in the running of the organization or providing for its maintenance. I had hoped that after five months of quiescence the meeting of the Board would be well attended and the present situation thoroughly discussed. Instead only the two Liebovitzs, Semel and Wachman showed up. Semel began to "nudge" me-to get on my nerves-with his appeal to me to keep the expense within the income. I saw that he too was trying to persuade me to send away Eisenstein and the staff of the school. Apparently Joe Levy had won over Wachman and

Wachman got Semel to propose that desperate remedy. On top of it all, Abe Liebovitz was getting ready to leave the meeting, and Harry Liebovitz was becoming more and more convinced as the evening wore on that the Board had never committed itself to any definite budget. At that point my patience snapped and I yelled out at the top of my voice "If you cannot guarantee the budget you adopted a few months ago I resign right now." I then took my hat and cane and walked out.

After I got home Abe Liebovitz called me up on the phone and urged me to have patience with the Board and the SAJ. This morning Eisenstein came to see me and we went over the entire affair. As a result of our conversation he went to see Klein and Harry Liebovitz and brought back a budget of about $31,000 which it seemed the Board would be in a position to guarantee. This led me to change my resolve not to speak on Kol Nidre night. I now expect to go through with the appeal as originally planned and then after Yom Kippur to insist on a leave of absence for a year.

The following "ritual questions" which I was asked the days following all my explanations of the meaning of Rosh Hashanah prove conclusively how radically incommensurate what I teach is with the mentality of the people I deal with:

1. "My mother-in-law is sick in the hospital. She has asked that I come to see her. But I vowed some time ago that I would have nothing to do with her. May I break my vow?"

2. The second question was: "A pigeon blew into my house and I cannot get it out. I am not superstitious, but isn't there some omen attached to this fact? And to overcome that omen must I not have the pigeon slaughtered?

The first question came opportunely on top of the new version that I have worked out for Kol Nidre as may be seen from the appended leaflet.

Tuesday, September 29, 1931

If it weren't for the pull of habit I wouldn't be writing this stuff just now. I have recently become interested in a new piece of work, and I begrudge every minute that I give to other things. Which is really more worthwhile? To consolidate the life lived so that it shall not pass out one's mind completely or to keep on moving into the future toward some objective? I mean by "worthwhile" capable of affording happiness. I do not suppose one answer can fit everybody. I can only speak for myself. I have to live in both worlds to get at that elusive state called happiness. This is probably why I have not been successful in bringing out any written work. I no sooner become absorbed in a task than the epicurean in me awakes and begins to demand the pleasure of feeding on memory. This demand must be the mental analogue of the physical urge of some animals to chew the cud.

If I weren't such a miser on time I should just now be attending the opening exercises of the Training School for Jewish Social Workers. I don't see that I am improving the opportunity of doing something useful by engaging in this adolescent sport of journal writing. But it can't be helped. If I am doomed to remain an adolescent all my life, let me make the best of it.

What is this new love of mine for the sake of which I have to fight hard with myself to go on with this journal writing? It is not the tentative program of social justice, the interest in which got me worked up to such a high pitch of enthusiasm that I was seeing myself delivering each week a chapter of this new book in the form of an address on Sunday night at the SAJ Auditorium. The struggle which I had to wage with the few members of the Board of Trustees to maintain the Hebrew school intact and to retain Eisenstein, and the indifference displayed by the majority of the Board to the SAJ

as such, cooled off my ardor for the plan of using the SAJ as a medium of self-expression.

At bottom my problem consists in finding a suitable medium that would stimulate me to be intellectually and spiritually creative. Neither the Seminary nor the Institute has been to me that kind of a medium. The hope of achieving a medium that would render me intellectually and spiritually creative has been frustrated. Perhaps that is why the Zionist movement has failed to be spiritually less productive since the Balfour Declaration than it was before. It is the same kind of a mistake as I made. The very creation of new media or environments must be regarded, for the time being, as an end in itself and not as a means to something else. But I certainly could not persuade myself that the men and women of the SAJ have sufficient potentialities for Jewish life to make their association of sufficient value to constitute an end in itself. This is why all my hopes with the SAJ have gone away. For one thing, though, I am grateful, and that is that I have gotten Ira Eisenstein to do for them all that a rabbi is expected to do for his congregation, and in that way at least save them for Jewish life and prevent or at least retard their being assimilated with the Gentile world.

With the SAJ eliminated as a stimulus to self-expression I had to give up the plan of working on a program of social justice. I then turned again to the Seminary where the course in Homiletics open to me to do with it anything that can reasonably be subsumed under that name. It occurred to me that I might make use of a great part of the sermon/material I had accumulated, by organizing it around the Festivals of the year. The point would be that the Festivals of the year should be interpreted in terms of current needs and world outlook, thereby becoming a more potent influence in shaping the Jewish consciousness than they are at present. The new and vital meanings

which they would thus acquire would constitute exceedingly worthwhile content for the Jewish mind. Suppose we were to make Rosh Hashanah stand for the idea of Religion as such, or for the Meaning of God in Human Experience, and then utilize as much as possible of the traditional setting to dwell upon the various uses to which religion must be put nowadays, the institution of Rosh Hashanah would acquire new life. Or suppose Yom Kippur were to be devoted to the idea of Remaking Human Nature and Sukkot to Gratitude and Equality, Shemini Azeret to Worship and Jewish Education, etc. etc. Judaism would undoubtedly become infinitely more alive.

I have actually taken steps to emancipate myself from the SAJ by sending in the letter which is herewith attached. To explain how it became at last possible for me to tear myself away I have to resume the story of my relations to the SAJ from the point where I said that I consented to make the appeal on Kol Nidre night. I not only made the appeal but even went on to announce the contributions. About $11,000 was raised in about twenty minutes. The most they had expected to raise was five to six thousand. I ascribe the success to a fluke which took place without any one intending it. This is what happened. After mentioning the two $1,000 contributions that had been gotten beforehand - one by Unterberg and the other by Harry Liebovitz - I asked who else was ready to contribute $1,000. I was sure I saw a certain Mr. Tishman raise his hand, and I called out "Mr. Tishman $1,000. Thank you Mr. Tishman." Before long Abraham Segal raised his hand for $1,000. These two contributions put me into so cheerful a frame of mind that I managed to get all the rest of the money by continuing to make encouraging remarks. Next day I learned that Tishman had never intended to give that amount. He is a man of moderate means and couldn't possibly afford to make such a contribution. It was by sheer accident that he raised

his hand and when I announced his name for that huge amount he was too stunned to make a move to set me right. I am quite sure that it was this announcement that electrified the audience and made them contribute so liberally.

Having made it possible for the SAJ to meet its budget this year I felt I could with a clear conscience ask for a leave from my duties especially preaching. The letter is now in Jacob Klein's hand and will be acted on next Monday.

The Teachers Institute and this year for the first time also the Seminary of Jewish studies, were formally opened last Thursday night. I did not come off so well with my address which, of course, had to be in Hebrew and as usual under those circumstances I was too miserable for words during the next twenty four hours.

I preached last Saturday - the first day of Sukkot - although I had not intended to do so. The letter asking for a leave had not yet been taken up and I felt that by preaching that day I would not have to enter into explanations which I was not as yet in a position to make.

* * *

Friday, October 2, 1931

It is nearly 6:30 A.M. This is the earliest time of the day I ever did any writing in this journal. I got up at 5:45 this morning to be in time for the Hoshanah Rabbah services which begin at 7:00. Having gotten through with my lustrations the question was what to do with the thirty minutes of that hour which mother always describes as "die goldene Stunde, die hat Gott im Munde." As I look out of the window my eyes revel in the shimmering gold of the morning air. Strange, isn't it that I should consider writing in this journal as the best use to which I could put such thirty rare minutes of serenity?

Suppose I were to take up any of the two dozen books that are on the table before me dealing with the various subjects on which I am working, or the Hebrew Grammar which all my life I have been trying to make headway in without success, and cram myself of as much of their contents as I could. Before a half hour would be over I would be as conscious of the taste of what I read as I am of the ice cream soda which I had last night. But every word I write is/I individual, particular, specific, and it keeps the I in that form as long as it lasts. It is either this terrible hunger after conscious dynamic engine throbbying selfhood, or it is the feeling of futility, weariness and tragedy of life that makes me glad to sink in the oblivion of sleep. These are the two states of mind between which I vacillate most of the time. I seldom enjoy the unself-conscious calm which those human beings for whom watches are not yet part of their brain must know. I was going to write so much but I have to rush to synagogue.

After Breakfast

Lena thought that I was doing the wrong thing in not preaching tomorrow at the Shimini Azeret services. She thought I should have waited for the SAJ Board of Trustees to act on my letter before I withdrew from the pulpit. Besides, the sermon tomorrow would have put the finishing touch to my efforts at the SAJ. These contentions moved me to start planning a sermon for tomorrow, but just as I was about to call up Eisenstein to tell him about my change of mind the mail brought the post card announcing that he would give the sermon. I have a notion that he is as anxious to preach as I am anxious to refrain from preaching, and I imagine he is under the impression that I undertook to preach the first day Sukkot after he had informed me that he would give the sermon. There was evidently some misunderstanding.

Finding that I did not have to prepare any sermon I was able to spend the day yesterday at the Teachers Institute. There I continued my work on the text and translation of Shir Hashirim.

The advantage of working at the Teachers Institute building is that it gives me an opportunity to come into closer touch with the affairs of the institution, with its teachers and students. Yesterday, for example, I strayed into Judith's class in Jewish music, which she was meeting for the first time. It is a long time since I have experienced such joy as I did yesterday when I watched her teaching. In spire of her nervousness on account of my presence she gave an excellent lesson full of interesting and useful content. I shall ever account this as one of the ~~xxxx~~ episodes of my life when I truly felt it was good to live.

Later Chertoff, one of the members of the staff, strayed into the office. He asked me to return to him the outline of the course in Jewish religion he had worked out at my suggestion on the basis of Bernfeld's p.184 . I tried to point out to him that the aim in his course ought to be to use the material in Bernfeld for the purpose of weaning the students away from the belief that Judaism is committed to supernatural conception of its origin and nature. He should point out that ever since Philo's days Judaism had been vainly struggling to find a rationalistic conception until it came upon the conception of national genius which I believe Hegel was the first to formulate for history in general, and Krochmal the first to apply to Jewish history. I had to labor hard to get Chertoff to realize that the concept of national genius was not interchangeable with the traditional concept of the origin of Judaism. One of the difficulties I find I have to contend with in dealing with people who have been brought up in the spirit of the Yeshivah is that they employ the modernist terminology as though it had

exactly the same connotation as the traditional. Either deliberately or ignorantly they refuse to recognize change or progress in ideas which bear on religion, and they readily appropriate new concepts which are the product of centuries of intellectual labor as though they were nothing more than new labels for old belief. These are the people who render the confusion in Jewish thinking the worse confounded.

When Chertoff finally realized that by accepting the concept "national genius" especially with the concomittant concept of "spiritual evolution" (which the Orthodox prattlers never reckon with) Judaism was adopting the rationalist spirit of the Occident, he posed the question: What remains of Judaism if it is to accept whatever happens to appeal to us? To this my reply was that Judaism possess sufficient character without having to be committed to any factual truth which has to be accepted on the authority of the past. The individuality of Judaism consists inthe supreme value it places on goodness. Jddaism will neve r tolerate Nietzche's philosophy of life.

* * *

Sunday, October 4, 1931

Sometimes I feel that the ancients were not altogether wrong when they spoke contemptuously of the body. I was just getting into trim to put in long hours of study when out of a clear sky I was incapacitated by a cold. Even when I have no colds I am continually being reminded by my body of its existence. When one day in seven it leaves off annoying me I feel so happy and grateful that I become the kindest person alive and there is nothing that I wouldn't do for anybody. But no sooner do I fall into the appreciative mood than I am pulled up with a jerk by a nasty cold that establishes itself in my head and works mischief throughout the rest of my body. I then

get to hate my body as though it were my worst enemy. It is only in youth when life pulsates vigorously and the body does not annoy us with its aches and pains that we imagine the ascetus and neo-platonists were absurd in treating the body as an offensive nuisance. The older we get, however, the more we are inclined to agree with them.

Am I to be charged with being morbidly pre-occupied with myself, because no sooner is holiday over than I rush to record my thoughts in this journal? What else could I do when I feel so starved for the society of people with whom I could exchange ideas and experiences. Could anything attest more strikingly to the sterility of all my efforts with the SAJ than the fact that in all the four days of this last festival which feel so conveniently on Saturdays and Sundays not a single person except May Lamport called at my house? It is true that the general feeling of depression may account in part for this absence of visitors at my home. But even so, if the people to whom I kept on talking for almost ten years had been at all appreciative of any of the ideas I have presented to them, they would have felt all the more reason the need of contact with me so as to elicit from those ideas all the possible comfort in a situation like the present. The fact probably is that there is not a man or a woman in that organization whose outlook on life has been affected in the least by the many years of my preaching. To secure their friendshup I should have had to give myself up entirely to them. I should have been to them a kind of spiritual family physician and then I would have deplored much more keenly their failure to respond to all my efforts to widen their mental and moral horizon. The best of them are of very mediocre soul fibre and most of that fibre has been subject to dry rot as a result of its basking for a while in

the sun of prosperity.

* * *

Thursday, October 8, 1931

The leave I asked for from the SAJ was granted last Monday night. Eisenstein reported that the Center people are making overtures to the SAJ with a view to amalgamation. They expect that Jung, whose salary has been reduced from $12,000 to $6,000 would xxxxxxx return to England.

* * *

Saturday night, October 17, 1931

A week ago yesterday Henry Hurwitz called on me at the Teachers Institute office. He told me the story of his conflict with Elliot Cohen and Herbert Solow which ended in the resignation of the latter two from the Menorah staff. Herbert Solow's articles on Zionism drew a reply from Rosensohn of the Zionist Administrative Committee. The answer did not come up to the literary standard of the magazine and was therefore consigned to the double column part of the magazine under the rubric of "Discussion." Rosensohn was highly incensed and demanded under threat of bringing pressure to bear that his letter be accorded as important a place on the magazine as had been given to Solow's articles. Hurwitz was ready to yield but Cohen and Solow were unbending. Greenman, the chairman of the Menorah board of trustees threatened to resign if Rosensohn's letter was not printed as a regular article. The resources of the Menorah are at a low ebb and Greenman's reisgnation would have meant the discontinuance of the magazine and the end of the Menorah organization. Hurwitz finally gave in, but Cohen and Solow refused to surrender and resigned.

I could believe Hurwitz when he told me that he wouldn't want to live through such an experience again. He seemed sad and broken. He practically admitted that he compromised with his ideals because his livelihood was at stake. He conceded that Elliot Cohen was a brilliant young man and of saintly character, but it would have been impossible for the Menorah to continue if it were to hew to the line of Cohen's policies. He justified his action on the ground that he did not agree with those policies fully, independently of the particular situation which brought the differences between him and Cohen to a head.

Yesterday I received the appended letter from Elliot Cohen. What can I say in answer to Cohen?

Not having to work on sermons this year I was not going to meet the three men, Rabbis Jacob Grossman, Isadore Signer and Leon B. Hurwitz with whom I have been in the habit for the last three years of discussing the sermons that I would work out for myself. After the holidays they called me up and asked me to resume the meetings. I consented but on the understanding that I was to discuss with them the new material I am trying to work out this year, which deals with the new interpretation to be given to the Jewish festivals. They then met with me at my house on Wednesday, Oct. 7. Instead of deriving any benefit from the discussion I felt I was merely being exploited by Leon B. Hurwitz, who tried to draw me out on the question of Jewish nunneries which he was going to speak on at his synagogue. The other two men kept on asking elementary questions which they should long ago have known to answer by themselves. I therefore adopted the suggestion made to me by Eisenstein, who was present at that meeting, to work with a more mentally alert group. He named Rabbis Henry Rosenthal and Fisher (of Arverne) and Boxer. Last

Monday he and Fischer met with me at the TI office and I at once realized how much more fruitful a discussion with men of that type can be than with the trio I had been meeting for the last few years. Signer was hearbroken when I informed him of my decision and tonight Grossman called up and pleaded that I should resume the meetings with them. I told him to get a group of his own that might come together once every week. I would then try to arrange to meet with them once a month. Incidentally, I intimated that Hurwitz be left out of the group. He seems to be persona non grata also with his colleagues who resent his tendency to exploit every possible opportunity to advertise himself.

Last Saturday I attended the Sabbath afternoon S'udah given in honor of my nephew (by marriage) Dr. Ira Kaplan who was p.187 and Mr. Monsky who was . It was quite a task for me to find kind of blah to serve up on this occasion. Fourteen years ago I had to do the same thing. (See Journal of that date.)

Last Sunday morning I officiated at the unveiling of the headstone on Simon Liebovitz's grave.

A peculiar thing happened to me that morning. Father's grave is only about fifty feet away from Liebovitz's. After the services my brother-in-law Isidore Rubin asked me to go over with him to father's grave and to read to him the inscription on the headstone. I read and translated it to him. The inscription is an acrostic on the name Israel and was written by Ezekiel Leavit. When I was through translating the inscription Isidore asked me "Was it written purposely for this headstone?" I said "Of course." He then asked "Did you write it?" and before I knew it I said "Yes." I suppose my vanity got the better of me for the moment. When I realized that I lied I experienced a genuine sense of sin, although when I tried

to analyze my state of mind I suspected that a good part of it was due perhaps to the fear that Isidore might sometime learn the truth about the inscription. This self-suspicion lowered me all the more in my own eyes, so that for a while I did not know what to do with myself. I was on the point of calling up Isidore and telling him that I had misled him into believing that I wrote the inscription. But that was too hard a pill to swallow. Just then Lena came into the room and I unburdened myself to her. She eased my conscience by saying "When you will happen to see Isidore you will get the matter off your mind." For the next twenty-four hours every time the thought of what I did occurred to me I almost felt sick to my stomach with self-disgust. But after a while the feeling wore off, and I go about my business as usual.

Eisenstein preaches brilliantly. That does not prevent him, however, from being careless at times in his interpretations of scripture and analysis of his propositions. This morning he preached a sermon that was masterly from the standpoint of some of the thoughts it contained. But as I reflected on what he said I was convinced that his sermon was a true illustration of p.189 even from the most modernistic point of view. He interpreted the story of the rainbow covenant to mean that the Torah represented God as having changed his method of dealing with violence. Whereas by destroying the world he had met violence with violence, he now determined to meet violence with peace. Eisenstein then continued by pointing out that peace was not a condition devoutly to be wished for but a method to be actually applied in dealing with crime, opporession, etc. In this part he mixed up his categories entirely. But he spoke so fluently and convincingly that I doubt whether anyone in the audience except myself noticed how full his sermon was of fallacies.

Since I had commended his previous sermons both privately and in public I felt I had a right to call his attention to the mistakes in the sermon he delivered today. Immediately after the services I asked him to take a walk with me and I discussed the sermon with him. I am glad to say that he saw the point at once and even corroborated my criticism by quoting the text p.189 against himself. I can see how the ignorance of the average audience permits a speaker to develop sloveliness in his thinking especially if he has a good command of English and is able to give to his generalization a spurious plausibility.

* * *

Sunday, October 18, 1931

Last Wednesday James Wise called at my home. He told me that he was planning to publish a Jewish weekly to be known as "Opinion." I have long been dpploring the lack of a readable Jewish weekly. The Jewish Tribune by no means came up to my idea of what a Jewish periodical ought to be, yet I was sorry that its publication was suspended because that was to me a portent of the waning of Jewish life. I was therefore quite elated to learn from James Wise that he intended to establish a new Jewish periodical of a high order and I readily accepted the invitation to join its Editorial Board.

Dr. Shalom Spiegel is a collyrium to my eyes, music to my ears and a challenge to my mind. He is good to look at. My ears drink in his musical voice as it intones the vibrant and colorful Hebrew diction he uses in speaking to me. I am both inspired and informed by his interpretations of the Jewish spirit. He called on me yesterday/and in my labored Hebrew which only hampered the expression of my thoughts I tried to convince him of the idea which is uppermost in my mind these days: that it is more important for Jewish life to

emphasize the break rather than the continuity with the relgious conceptions that governed it in the past. If Jewish life will have the power and the courage to perform this surgical operation upon itself its future is assured. He kept on reminding me, however, that those to whom I appeal have first to be imbued with Jewish life, and that any such emphasis as I advocate will prevent them from wanting to live a Jewish life. This is as a matter of fact what I had hoped to accomplish when I organized the SAJ but it hasn't worked out. The layman is too ignorant to appreciate the distinction between Jewish life and Jewish religion, or too reluctant to bother with Jewish life unless it can give him immediately authoritative and acceptable religious values. It is impossible to make him realize that being a Jew at the present time means first, being willing to identify oneself with the life and career of the Jewish people and to adopt as much of its civilization as is feasible in a non-Jewish environment, and secondly, being willing to reconstruct the religious concepts and practices which constitute the central element in that civilization so that they may answer our present day spiritual needs.

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Thursday, November 12, 1931

The sculptor A. J. Goodelman is working on a plaque portrait of me. He was given the commission by Thau and his wife (formerly Miss Frances Krasnow) at whose wedding I officiated about a year and a half ago. The plaque is to hang in one of the rooms of the Teachers Institute building. I have had so far five sittings of an hour to an hour and a half each at Goodelman's studio on 238 St. cor Sedgwick Avenue.

Harry Liebovitz and Bernard Semel came to see me last Tuesday (Nov. 3) as a committee to urge me to resume preaching at the SAJ at least once a month. I acceeded to their request and preached last Saturday on the article "A Challenge to Israel" which appeared in the current number of Harper's magazine. There was an attendance of 168 and the sermon was well received.

* * *

Tuesday, November 17, 1931

Saturday, November 7, Edwin Samuel, son of Sir Herbert Samuel, came to see me. He is organizing a group of people to study the question of Jewish Arab relations in Palestine and to further such measures as would tend to improve them. I consented to be one of the group.

Prof. Salo Baron had made the appointment with me for Mr. Samuel. Baron came a little while after Samuel and stayed for some time after Samuel left. There is much in common between Baron's approach and mine toward Jewish history, but we divided when it comes to the more spiritual implications. Before long we fell into a discussion of nationalism. He maintained that the obverse of universalism was pure individualism and that nationalism was bound to disappear. I opposed his assumptions on two grounds. First the human being cannot escape the variety of historical traditions ghat have arisen and that continue to arise as the result of the associations with particular localities. Man is like a tree rooted in some particular soil. Second. The freedom of individualism is in actuality a freedom to choose the particular group or groups to which one is to attach oneself. Otherwise it would be freedom in a void.

On Monday afternoon, Nov. 9 I met Baron again, under very different circumstances. He and I sat in with the rest of the Faculty of the Training School for Jewish Social Workers as a jury to decide on the case of a first year student (Cohen) who did some tall lying when he applied for a position as a club leader. It was the first time the Faculty of that institution was called together by the Director, Maurice Karpf.

I was in favor of withdrawing the fellowship from the student regardless of the fact that it might mean that Cohen would have to leave xx the school. We have as it is enough moral weaklings in Jewish work; we should by no means encourage any more to come into it.

On November 2 I met the greater number of the young people whom Benderly is training in his Kvuzah. Appended is the list of questions they wanted me to answer. I discussed only the first and the last. The possibility of having those young people dedicate themselves to the philosophy and practice of Judaism as a civilization stimulated me in my talk to them. Although I spoke in Hebrew, I experienced no difficulty whatever in expressing all that I wanted. In fact, I was no less fluent than if I had spoken in English.

But I must not expect the young people to take fire as a result of one or two discussions. It requires my using the bellows times without number before the spark can become a flame.

The talk I gave before the Friedlaender Classes Monday, Nov. 9, was largely the same as the one I had given from the pulpit on Sat., Nov. 7 and it took very well. This is what I call conservation of energy.

How I loathe those Seminary Faculty meetings! The moment I enter the room every part of me turns into raw flesh and every move of my colleagues somehow agonizes me. If I had the ability and the patience I would dramatize those meetings in the genre of the play "Wings Over Europe," where one whole act is devoted to a meeting of the English Cabinet.

The curtain rises on the meeting room at 3P.M. with the following present:

Hoschander, Hyamson, Levine, the first and the last reading books and Hyamson the morning Times. Boaz Cohen sits and stares. The rest straggle in in the following order: Kaplan, Davidson, with his papers and Ginzberg who expects everybody to take notice of him. Then Adler sluches in with a loud greeting to the Faculty, immediately after him Finkelstein with his hair dishevelled rushes in. After everybody is seated and the minutes are being read Marx enters and as soon as he sits down he begins to work at his pipe.

(I have ~~mk~~ no time to go on with the description and will merely note the incidents that irritated me at the meeting which took place last Wednesday.)

1. Attention was called to the fact that of about 15 to 20 students who were awarded bursarships and scholarships many amounting from five to eight hundred dollars only one man acknowledged the award. This gave rise to the usual discussion about the need of teaching the students manners. From this the discussion passed over to the need of telling the men who are on the dormitories that they must not drop a nickel in the slot machine to telephone on the Sabbath nor turn on the light. It looks as though there is going to be quite a rumpus. Some one reported these "violations" of the Sabbath to Davidson and Davidson turned over the matter to Finkelstein/himself and Finkelstein is quite worked up over it and he is probably busy

thinking up some sophistries by which to tie the students down to regulations which they must necessarily rebel against.

2. Adler read some letters from congregations before which the students preached the last High Holidays. A casual remark in one of those letters about a student's confining himself to preaching led to the usual ~~max~~ inane discussion about the students' acting as Hazanim.

3. The assignment to seminary graduates holding positions in New York of candidate for graduation whom they are to induct in the practical side of the ministry gave Adler an opportunity to tell the story about a woman relative of the late Mr. Bush, who became a convert to Christianity. She had been a member of Temple Emanuel. When she moved out to Westchester she was at once looked up by the local clergyman who called on her. The late Rabbi Silverman of Emanuel happened to meet her. He admitted he had never met her mother. When he alluded to the fact that he understood she had accepted Christianity she retorted that one of the reasons she took that step was that in all the years that her people had been members of Emanuel Silverman had never visited them.

This story was intended to point out the main failing of the men who are graduated from the Seminary. But if that is the case, why doesn't Adler try to counteract that false and misleading standard glorified under the name of scholarship and continually held up before the men as the only worthwhile thing for a rabbi to engage in. Bibliotry - the worship not only of the book but even of useless manuscripts as though the salvation of Judaism depended upon them -- is undoubtedly effective in augmenting the respect of the students and graduates for the bookmen on the faculty, but it undermines the self-respect of the majority who have not the time for those esoteric and irrlevant studies and distorts their sense of Jewish values.

4. Hyamson's letter suggesting the subject of Calendar Reform as a subject for a class essay brought out the unanimity of the men in the determination to fight the reform on the ground that it would jeopardize the existence of Judaism. Yet Adler himself mentioned the fact that the calendar which we go by is itself the result of radical changes and that it is itself in an imperfect condition. There is absolutely no transfer of reasoning from one situation to another with those compartmental minds.

These were only some of the irritating incidents at that meeting.

I gave my book on Judaism as a Civilization to Shalom Spiegel which he kept for two weeks. He read it through carefully and made notes. Last Saturday night he came to speak to me about it. He seems to consider it an important piece of work. When I asked him what should be my next move, he hinted quite plainly that I ought to transfer my activity from the Seminary to the JIR. I would not have hesitated to take that step now or at any time before if Wise were free from the weaknesses so excellently described in an article about him which appeared in a recent number of the New Yorker. I am genuinely fond of him, but I doubt whether I could work with him in the cause of Judaism which, to be effectively promulgated, would have to absorb the whole of him as well as of me. I would deeply resent and be jealous of any outside interest to which he would continue to be drawn.

I have very little hope of being awarded the Rosenwald prize. I have to make up my mind what to do with the book. In the meantime there are other things to think about.

I am appending the letter I received from Rosenthal. It throws a side light on my relationship to the Reformists who hate me no less than my colleagues. I am not suffering from a persecution complex. On the contrary, what I always marvel at is that my colleagues who are so violently opposed to my views do nothing to suppress me. In fact the Reformists would probably hound me in very effective fashion if I had occupied a position in their world similar to the one I occupy in the conservative camp. Schulman has attacked me from his pulpit; A.H. Silver in a pamphlet; and at some of the recent conferences of the CCAR I have been far more severely criticized than I have been at the Rabbinical Assembly.

When I saw Eugene O'Neill's "Mourning Becomes Electra" on Sat. night Oct. 31 I felt that it dramatized in modern guise the Greek conception of life. The very fact that the ancient Greek theme could find such noble and powerful expression in the modern drama points to the vitality of that theme. This vitality is probably due to the consonance between the Greek conception of life and the one which is dominant in western civilization today. Fundamentally that conception is pessimistic and the same as the one that is voiced in the writings of Spengler, Krtuch, Aldous Huxley et al.

If the Electra theme reflects the mood of Greek civilization, Job reflects the mood of Jewish civilization. If O'Neill's "Mourning Becomes Electra" proves that the Greek philosophy of life is still the dominant note of western civilization, Joseph Roth's "Job: The Story of a Simple Life" proves that the Jewish philosophy of life still functions in the Jew.

The difference between the two philosophies of life is this: According to Hellenism man is trapped; according to Judaism man is tested. As philosophies of life they both try to appraise the evil

in human life. That is the main business of both religion and philosophy. Hellenism sees evil as predominant, victorious and ultimately bound to destroy man. Judaism sees evil as challenge, spur and test of man's spirit. Its hope of the millenium should be taken not as a static goal but as a receding horizon. (p.195) In Hellenism Fate is Supreme and fate wears out both men and gods. In Judaism God Himself is fate and evil mere chaos and negation which God keeps on conquering.

* * *

Wednesday, November 18, 1931

I had a very exciting day today. The greater part of it was taken up with meetings. The first one was the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Rabbinical Assembly. Israel Levinthal began to read off the names of the various committees that he was about to appoint. When I asked him what was to be the function of those committees he was totally at a loss what to say. After much discussion a special committee was appointed to define the functions and to report at the next meeting of the Executive Committee. Remembering the attempt that Levinthal had made at the ~~last~~ recent convention of the Assembly to obstruct the presentation of the resolution which I had urged Steinberg to introduce, calling for a committee to bring in a tentative report on what ought to be the attitude of the Rabbinical Assembly to the fundamental problems of Judaism. I was on the alert to see what he would do about the appointment of such a committee. To my consternation I learned that he had written to Rabbi Klein of Philadelphia to act as chairman. Klein was not present at the ~~last~~ recent convention and has neither the knowledge nor the mentality to grapple with so important a task as this committee would have to perform. I then asked Levinthal to read from the minutes of the convention the wording of the resolution when, to my amazement, he tells me that there is nothing in the minutes about any such resolu-

tion . I naturally lost my temper and accused him of trying to squelch the resolution. In spite of Levinthal's explanation and my apology to him for suspecting him of political intrigue unworthy of any self-respecting organization, I still believe the whole procedure was simply a contemptible piece of trickery.

What riled me was to see Finkelstein hand in glove with Levinthal in obstructing every move I made to save the resolution from being nullified by Levinthal's tactics. Not so long ago Finkelstein complained both to Kadushin and Eisenstein that I didn't trust him. After the way he acted at today's meeting I can't see how he can be trusted.

The second meeting was of the Editorial Board of the new periodical Opinion, which took place at 60 W. 68 St. Among those present were Edman, Wise, father and son, George Kohut, Smerstenko, Beryl Levy and Mark who is to be the publisher.

The third meeting was the one called by Edwin Samuel on the Jewish Arab relations. It took place at Mrs. Jacobs' home, 201 W. 78 St. and lasted from 8:30 to 11 P.M.

Why don't I know better than to waste my time on these meetings? When the Seminary students ask me again and again to give them a seminar I refuse and I allow myself to be drawn into the vortex of these useless activities. I wish somebody would protect me against these invasions into my dearest possession - my time. I am totally helpless and impotent when a Jimmie Wise or an Edwin Samuel ask me to help them in their undertakings.

* * *

Thursday, November 19, 1931

This has been one of my full days. I attended efficiently to what I had to do and achieved tangible results. I worked on the translation of Midrash Shir Hashirim and on the editing of the text and I formulated an outline of the talk I had been scheduled to give before the Barnard Menorah group. In the afternoon I gave the talk on the Changing Functions of Religion.

After I was through with the talk Rabbi Braunstein, one of the recent graduates of the JIR who is religious adviser to the Jewish students at Columbia told me a few things which upset me a good deal, though I should have been used to them by now. He is having a hard time getting the necessary support for the work that he is doing. The only two men who have been generous and helpful to him are Judge Irving Lehman and Judge Cardozo. Edman who is a member of the Columbia Faculty and was to have served as liaison officer between the University and the Jewish student body, resigned from the committee that made itself responsible for the work done by Braunstein. Braunstein told me that about two years ago a short time after his work had begun Edman called him in and told him that he didn't like him nor what he was doing. He would have preferred to see a medieval kind of rabbi in charge. I can't imagine what was back of those words. Dean Hawkes attributed Edman's attitude to his poetic and temperamental nature. A. H. Sulzberger (Och's son-in-law) had this to say to Braunstein: "If you'd promise me to have my ideas about what you ought to do rather than Judge Lehman's I would see to it that you get the necessary support." Sulzberger had reference to what he regarded as Lehman's rather strong emphasis upon the Jewish aspect of the work. According to Sulzberger, Braunstein ought to prevent the Jewish students on the campus from getting together socially. Braunstein, of course, could not in self-respect permit himself to be dictated to in that way. He suggested

to Sulzberger to present his views before the committee. The rabbis whose cooperation Braunstein has been seeking have been very ungracious toward him. When an Israel Goldstein (who is a member of the Committee referred to above) or a Herbert Goldstein is asked to speak, the first thing they want to know is whether there will be enough people to make it worth while for them to come, or they will insist upon getting notice sufficiently ahead of time or offer some other obstructive reason for their failure to cooperate. One would have imagined that Braunstein would be encouraged by Salo Baron who is professor of Jewish history and literature. But all the encouragement Baron offered was: I am not interested in Judaism as a religion, and don't expect any help from me. It is only in the Law School that two Jews who are on the faculty there evinced some sympathy with his efforts in behalf of Jewish students. In the meantime all the funds for his work are exhausted and he will probably have to give it up entirely.

The talk I gave this afternoon could very well serve as the outline of a course or of a book on religion. The following are the points I made:

1. Religion is beset with more misunderstanding than any other phenomenon of life because of prejudices entertained towards it and unwarranted notions about it held both by believers and non-believers. Hence objective and dispassionate view rarely reached.

2. The main source of confusion is the prevalent notion that religion is the relation of man to the supernatural. Religionists give that as reason for their adherence to religion and non-believers as reason for their indifference or opposition to religion.

3. The misunderstanding of religion may thus be attributed to the fact that religion is thought of as having but a single function. Failing that it has no place in human life. A more correct way of viewing religion is to regard it as one of the outstanding attempts on

the part of man to adjust himself to life. That attempt has found various expressions, one of which has been on the basis of a dichotomy of existence into the natural and supernatural.

4. This dichotomy has by no means been the only assumption upon which religion has sought to base itself. This becomes clear when we study religion from the standpoint of the uses to which it has been put in the course of its career. To study those uses we should ask the question: What functions were the gods of the various religions regarded as fulfilling in helping man in his struggle for existence?

5. From a survey of the history of religion we find that the gods were regarded as functioning in three capacities a) to help man satisfy his natural hungers; b) to help him maintain the integrity of his group; c) to sponsor civil law and social justice.

6. a) It is necessary to realize that to the ancient man the physical environment was completely animate. Its visible parts -- trees, stones, rivers, springs -- were entities that possessed personality. In addition there were invisible beings that were believed to manifest themselves occasionally to man. It is wrong to apply the term supernatural to these beings. They constituted for the ancients the conception of phenomena we now include in the term Nature. Insofar as man was dependent upon these putative beings (visible and invisible) for the satisfaction of his hungers, he employed devices which he regarded as essential to obtaining their favor and refrained from what he imagined would offend them. Thus arose the complex systems of practices and tabus which formed the most conspicuous element in ancient religions.

b. The god in his function as the guardian of the group integrity had to protect his worshipers against outside foes. He was thus the god of war. In that capacity he injected the tedency to arrange the various gods into a hierarchy. This tendency led to some one god coming to occupy a position of primacy. In addition the tendency to

In addition the tendency to ?p.199 resulted from the need to merge different populations and cultures that the fortunes of war and migration brought together. Loyalty to the traditions that emphasized group unity was expected from every member of the group.

c. The god as sponsor of internal peace was regarded as sponsoring the civil laws by which men were governed in their relations to each other mainly as individuals. Insofar as internal peace made for group unity one would expect to find that the gods who led in war would usually lay down the laws governing men's relations to one another. Nevertheless these two functions must not be considered as identical.

7. The place of the Jewish religion in the history of religion. In working out this outline it would be necessary to illustrate at this point the way in which the foregoing functions were carried out in the beginnings of the religion of Israel.

8. It appears that as a result of historical circumstances and the extraordinary devotion of Israel's spiritual leaders to their own people and to the ideal of righteousness there was effected in the consciousness of the Jew a synthesis of the three functions. That synthesis derived from the belief that the three functions were inherently interdependent. Consequently the Jewish consciousness had to find rest in the conception of a god who united in himself all those functions.

Saturday night, November 21, 1931

This led to YHWH absorbing into himself all the three functions, although after the Israelites arrived in Canaan he figured chiefly as a war god.

9. Thus ethical monotheism which the Jews contributed to the development of religion has as its background the three functions which the various gods were associated with and resulted from the process of elimination that the Jews applied to them. That is sufficient to give to ethical monotheism an entirely different significance and function

from those that properly belong to philosophical monotheism.

10. The next stage in the development of religion takes place when the expected harmony among the three functions is not borne out by experience. The natural inference from the belief is one god who provides well being, exacts loyalty and righteousness in that the latter two virtues would be rewarded by him with well being. Three solutions have been offered by mankind:

a. Zoroastrianism - Dualism or belief in two gods.
b. Judaism - Belief in two worlds.
c. Buddhism - Release or Escape

) This part I added while I was writing up this outline.

(This of course assumes that, although there was no ethical monotheism which preceded Zoroastrianism and Buddhism among the respective peoples which adopted those religions, the stage of polytheism had already been outgrown by them and they would have adopted ethical monotheism had they not been too far advanced culturally to accept it in the simple form in which it first presented itself to the Jews.)

11. The solution of the "two worlds," this world and the next, gave rise to a new function for religion. The main interest of man came to be what to do or how to live in their world so that he might feel sure of salvation or a share in the world to come. It was assumed, of course, that one had to live in accordance with the will of God, and that God had declared His will in some unmistakable revelation. Jewish religion pointed to the Torah, Christianity to Christ and Mohammedanism to the Koran. During this stage of religion when it was otherworldly (it still is with the Catholics today) God functioned as the creator not alone of this world but also as that of the world to come. It is through the latter that His godhood is to be chiefly manifested, hence it designation as the Kingdom of God.

12. With the Renaissance the three functions come to be regarded as within the province of human ingenuity and self-expression.

Science and invention, patriotism and social legislation and reform are removed from the province of religion.

13. a. But as a consequence there is a resurgenceof the need for that sense of the unity of life which would enable man's sense of loyalty and of righteousness to develop synchronously with that control over nature which gives him the means to well being. Man has to learn to see life whole. The term God comes now to connote the totality of existence (interpreted pragmatically by Hocking and metaphysically by Whitehead).

b. The second danger is the sense of futility, impotence and vanity. If the age of deficit gave rise to otherworldliness in this age of surplus man becomes subject to failure of nerve and disillusionment. The apostles of this attitude are Schopenhauser, Spengler, B. Russel, Krutch and . In the face of this danger godhood is that quality of life which renders life significant and worthwhile despite all the evil that mars it and the function of religion consists in keeping us conscious of this worthwhileness.

I have to give a talk tomorrow night before the Jewish Teachers Association on children's services. Since I am in the swing of writing in this journal I might as well indicate here the general lines of what I expect to say.

1. It is conceded that one of the aims of Jewish education is to train the children in certain attitudes, capacities and skills that are desirable from the Jewish point of view. If we intend to have children's services it can only be because we regard an aptitude for public worship and the ability to enjoy and enrich it desirable from the Jewish point of view.

2. But this very desirability is often questioned. It is evident that unless the teacher himself is convinced of that desirability

he can contribute nothing to the proper conduct of children's services. The first prerequisite is that the teacher himself have a philosophy of public worship.

3. In such a philosophy it is necessary to begin not so much with the formulation of definite proofs of the existence of God as with a working conception of God that is compatible with our modern outlook. To meet this requirement the belief in God must be understood as being synonymous with the affirmation of the world's unity and interrelatedness, and of life's worthwhileness despite all the evils that mar it.

4. But may not one become aware of and give expression to this affirmation through meditation and private devotion which are independent of specific forms and liturgies which are the product of public worship? This necessitates the justification of public worship on the following two grounds:

a. The human being is gregarious. There is no reason why this tendency to gregariousness should not be utilized to elicit powers emotions etc of high worth.

b. The value of public worship consists in the fact that it serves as a means of eliciting the creative abilities especially in the arts, such as architecture, music, poetry and in ancient times also sculpture, painting and the drama, and affords them that cosmic scope which no other phase of human life affords. Besides, public worship directs man's abilities into channels of expression where their products can be enjoyed under circumstances that are free on the one hand, from the taint of private ownership and, on the other, from the inanity and boredom of museums.

5. As Jews we have a definite tradition to be reckoned with. The question from the standpoint of public worship as the affirmation of the divine is "How shall that tradition be related to the specific conception of God as we now understand it? The answer consists in reco-

nizing the three elements which constitute the traditional form of worship viz a) instruction; b) thanksgiving and c) petition, and putting those three elements to such use as to make them a means of affirming the unity of the cosmos and the worthwhileness of life.

a. Using the texts which are a record of Israel's religious experience and interpreting them in the light of the present day conception of God. This makes reading of scriptures and preaching the principal element in Jewish public worship no less now than it ever was.

b. The reiterated praises of God should be regarded as appreciative affirmation of the unity and significance of life as expressive of gratitude for the potentialities for good that inhere in the world.

c. Petition is no longer to be regarded as a means of obtaining one's hearts desires but as a means of training oneself to desire what is legitimate, helpful and worthy.

6. In order to make worship an effective means of putting men's gregariousness to it shighest possible uses and eliciting creative abilities it should be treated as the form of pageantry into which all the arts are to be concentrated.

7. The bearing of all this on the training of children for public worship is that the children's services must be treated as a project to be developed as part of the work in the class. The building of a service should be gone into with the same gusto as getting up a play. The problem of mechanical reading would be solved to a large extent if the children were aware that they have to learn to read and sing the liturgical parts in order to render the service impressive. In this one section after anotherof the liturgy could be mastered. But this is the least. The children should be trained to take different parts in the service. The part which has to do with instruction lends

itself to wide participation. The scriptural reading could be taught in class; the sermon to be preached could be the outcome of composition work after discussion. The element of thanksgiving could become the occasion for creative effort with the aid of the teachers in writing and music who could get the children to express in their own way the attitude of appreciation of the various goods which might be pointed out to them. The element of petition could be the occasion for the teacher working out collectively with the children the things they should pray for. Moreover the element of pageantry and even the dramatic might in time be introduced. These give an opportunity for procession, march songs, impressive readings and recitations and working on decorative and ceremonial objects.

* * *

Sunday, November 29, 1931

I am working at present on the subject of Electra vs. Job. I find it extremely intriguing because it compels me to get at the root of the distinction between the temper of Western civilization and that of the Jewish civilization. What I have arrived at so far is that the Occidental temper regards life as the working ut of an inescapable doom and man as a creature that is trapped. The Jewish temper, on the other hand, views life as unpredictable and marked by miracles which upset all calculations, and man as a creature that is tested. The pattern which answers the Occidental temper is that of a spider in whose web are caught the flies it feeds on. That spider is Fate or Necessity. The gods are the filaments of the web. With the growth of knowledge the gods are replaced by what man terms the laws of nature. At first man exulting in the power of manipulating some of those forces forgets the existence of the spider. But as he learns still more he becomes aware that there are forces within his blood, lusts, desires, subconscious and heredity which work with the same inevitability as the mechanical forces

but which he cannot bring under control. Once again he is overwhelmed by the sense of helplessness. This is the meaning of the disillusionment from which the Western man suffers today.

The pattern which answers to the Jewish temper is that of a government that raises money by lottery. Everyone pays for a chance, but though only a few win the prizes, the government is able to carry on by means of what each one pays. God is the orderor government of life made possible through the contribution which each individual being makes towards life. Though but few win the prizes every one is a beneficiary to some extent. It may happen that those who win the prizes of life are impelled by a sense of justice to return the greater part of their winnings to the government treasury. By this they earn the good will of the government and benefit their fellow citizens. Thus winning the prize puts them to the test. The majority who do not win or who lose even what they have are apt to rebel against the government. They forget that they owe their very life to the existence of government. Thus are the majority who do not win the prizes tested. This does not imply that the majority must resign themselves to social evils which are remediable but it does mean that they must not condemn life as worthless because they do not happen to have won the prizes. There inconsists their test.

* * *

Monday, November 30, 1931

It would not do, of course, to use the lottery as an analogy for literary or speaking purposes. To most people lottery suggests gambling and they would recoil at the thought that life has a gambling element in it. To me, however, that analogy contains numerous implications which convey most remarkably what I believe to be the actual fact about reality, many more implications than I could do full justice to with my labored style of writing.

In working further upon that theme I found it necessary to state Judaism's proposition about life and man somewhat differently. I identified the element of miracle which Jewish religion stresses with the intuition that life is not merely the unwinding of a wound up spring but a continuous process of creation.

* * *

Tuesday, December 1, 1931

This points, perhaps, to an implication in the traditional belief in m iracle, which may make it possible to retain the notion of miracle in the ideological texture of Jewish civilization. Hitherto I have found nothing of a redeeming nature in that belief and saw nothing in it but detrimental absurdity. Now I am beginning to feel that the psychological implication back of the delight which our ancestors took in emphasizing the element of miracle may have been the desire to set forth the fact of elan vital and creative urge as bringing about the new and unexpected. The close connection which the Jewish medieval philosophers established between the belief in creatio ex nihilo and belief in miracles on the one hand, and the belief in a primal hyle and the denial of miracles bears out the foregoing psychological implication. God for the Jews meant essentially a creator, and a being who had to depend for what he did upon given conditions was not a god. To deny creation was therefore to deny God.

This afternoon, as I was teaching the class in the Training School for Jewish Social Workers, I said that a Sunday School was incompatible with a religion which claimed to be rooted in reason rather than supernatural revelation, since a Sunday school necessarily meant teaching young children whose powers of reason were still immature. One of the students then told me the following. All that she remembers of the three years of her attendance at Sunday school is an incident

which occurred in her class when one of the little girls was unable to answer the questions put to her on her lesson in Jewish history. The teacher of the class happened to have known that both parents of the little girl had themselves been teachers in the same Sunday school. She therefore expressed surprise at the fact that the little girl did not know her lesson, and added, "How is it you don't know the lesson? Couldn't you have your father or your mother go over it?" The child was not at all non-plussed and answered calmly, "My mother is a Christian Scientist and my father is a judge and therefore too busy to pay attention to my lessons." The judge is Judge Lewis of Brooklyn.

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Saturday night, December 12, 1931

There is to follow now a boring account of talks, addresses and sermons I have delivered the last ten days or so. The incidental experiences, however, are slightly interesting.

On Wednesday night I gave a talk before about sixty young people on the sociological background of Jewish recreational and cultural movements (?) in this country. In the appended outline there is no mention whatever of the Yiddishist movement which more than any other deserves to be seriously reckoned with as a movement. This oversight is due to two causes which are essentially one. First, the young people I addressed are entirely ignorant of the existence of Yiddishism and will have no occasion to come in contact with that movement if they will do any work as club leaders. Secondly, I myself know of the existence of that movement only because I read Yiddish once in a while; otherwise my whole Jewish ideology is carried on without any need of taking Yiddishism into account. It is as though the Yiddishists belonged to two different nations. Why do the Reformists touch my life at many more points than the Yiddishists do? Is it because they belong to the same bourgeois class I do? I hardly think so. I believe that

their interest in the Jewish religion despite their denial of Jewish nationality renders them indispensable in my thinking in Judaism. This fact is apparently disturbing to my conception of Judaism as a civilization. But in reality it is this very fact that I am endeavoring to alter. I am convinced that it would do me and those I work with infinitely greater good if the Yiddishists rather than the Reformists were our antagonists in the controversy. The controversy would then not have been as sterile as it is now. Our religious thinking would have been clarified and our nationalism would have found expression in esthetic endeavor.

What made me accept the invitation to speak before these young people? I am all the time deploring the various distractions that prevent me from doing sustained literary work, and here I consent to spend about eight hours of my time to no particular purpose. But this is what happened. About five weeks ago Landau, who is on the staff of the Welfare Board, called me up early in the morning and asked me whether he could come over to see me at once. The first thing that came to my mind was that my brother-in-law Phineas Israeli who is earning his livelihood as chaplain for the Welfare Board must have done something very foolish and that he would have to be dismissed. Such fear was not altogether groundless, because not long after Phineas had received his appointment Gluckerman who is the Executive Director of the Welfare actually did come to see me for just such purpose. Consequently as soon asI put down the receiver I made ready to meet Landau. I was so upset about the news that I expected to hear that I did not remain in the house but put on my coat and waited downstairs until Landau appeared. It was then that he told me of the course on club leadership that he planned for the Welfare Board jointly with the Metropolitan League and that he wanted me to open the course. Iwas so overjoyed that his mission had nothing to do with Phineas that I

readily consented to deliver the address. There is nothing within reason that I would then have refused him.

This dread of being deprived of a livelihood, even if it touches me indirectly, completely unnerves me. There is something radically wrong with a state of society in which ~~this~~ human beings should have this Damacles sword hanging constantly over them, and something wrong with a moral and spiritual upbringing in which nothing is done to render us callous to economic insecurity, which under present circumstances can scarcely mean for people like myself, or my brother-in-law either actual starvation or lack of shelter. It is remarkable how little of these fears was reflected in the talk I gave. Which only goes to show how little this kind of talk must have to do with the fundamental realities either of my life or of the lives of those I addressed. We are like little automatic dolls wound up to go through a series of motions and these we go through mechanically without affecting the course of things for good or for ill.

Last Sunday night I spoke on Electra vs. Job at the affair given under the auspices of the SAJ known as Lecture-Supper-Dance which took place at the Savoy-Plaza. There were more than 325 present. I was in pretty good trim physically and had the address all written out. Now and then I made extempore excursions, and I was quite eloquent in answering the five questions put to me by people from the audience. All in all I made a very good job of it this time and the people were very happy. Some of them remarked that it brought back the spirit that characterized the SAJ when it was first organized. Yet I know that that could not last very long. The economic crisis is all the time in the foreground of men's minds. The prevailing state of mind is that of fear and anxiety. I cannot recall anything of the years of the Great War to compare in demoralization with the way the people feel these days.

I doubt whether anything can be done to galvanize the SAJ or any of the other Jewish institutions into functioning. Neither Eisenstein nor any of the others of the SAJ staff is being paid any salary. In the Seminary I hear continually of retrenchment being contemplated and carried out. The latest I heard was that the old building on 123 St. would be given up and the Seminary move into the new Teachers Institute building.

A week ago Friday I got the appended letter from Goldman. I can't make out his relationship to me. For that matter I can't make him out either. Is he a Jekyll and Hyde with Hyde in the ascendency?

Last Wednesday I addressed the Friedlaender classes at their Hanukkah gathering. The classes looked considerably depleted. With Chipkin giving his time and effort gratis I would not think of refusing anything he asks me to do for these classes. But the situation is rather melancholy.

Eisenstein was unable to come to synagogue today. So I had to fill in and deliver the sermon. Although it meant another eight hours wasted, I at least spoke well and was compelled to formulate specifically the evidences of what is usually termed the will to live as Jews. I have found them to be the following:

a) The desire to experience a sense of continuity with the past of the Jewish People. (Orthodox through literal acceptance of tradition and the others through reinterpretation.)

b) The urge to avail oneself of every possible opportunity for self expression as Jews.

c) The urge to seek out the society of fellow Jews for purposes of mutual and universal benefit.

The point I made was that, given the will-to live as a Jew which possesses these three characteristics, one can be trusted to assimilate the best of other civilizations without being assimilated by them.

I forgot to mention that at the talk last Wednesday I brought out the following:

a) The Jews by repudiating the Books of the Maccabees have performed the unprecdented and since unparalleled act of renouncing a war record that any people might be proud of.

b) When we compare this act of renunciation with the glorification (not borne out by the facts) of the conquest of Canaan by Joshua we note the spiritual growth of the Jewish people.

Last Thursday night Dr. Louis Ginzberg and his wife paid us a social visit. My relationship to him is beset with so many inhibitions that I actually feel uncomfortable whenever his wife calls up Lena to tell us that she and her husband would like to visit with us. They tried to call on us last year but somehow I was never free when they could come. Instead I always prefer to call upon them as the lesser of two evils. The real reason for my regarding Ginzberg's visit as an ordeal is that I must restrain myself from touching upon any phase of the problem of Judaism when I am together with him, so impassable is the gulf that divides us in our thinking. Consequently I have to be at my wits' ends to think up something to talk about. This time I thought perhaps an opportunity would present itself during our conversation for me to ask him to stop thinking in the indicative mood and the past tense and begin thinking in the imperative mood and present tense. But no such opening presented itself and we parted without any attempt on my part (and certainly not on his) to break down the wall of spiritual antagonism that exists between us.

What is the matter with these scholars? Do they have such contempt for a man like myself that they would not condescend to discuss with me the problem of Judaism? Or are they so unfeeling and unimaginative as not to realize how my soul cries out to them just because they possess mastery of details, to come out from behind the piles of information they have stored up, and to act and talk like Jews who are sensitive to the "Judenschmerg" and would use some of their knowledge for the purpose of healing that "schmerz?" There he sat all evening with a face like a mask. And mine too had to freeze into a mask. And there we talked to each other for two hours like automatons.

The only item of interest that emerged from the conversation that evening was the one about the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. It came out in connection with Diezendruch whose name Mrs. Ginzberg brought up to show what power her husband wielded in academic circles. According to Ginzberg, the main emphasis at the Hebrew University should have been placed on the cultivation of the Jewish studies. Instead Magnes has been harboring the illusion that the University might serve as a means of fostering friendly relations between Jews and Arabs. To that end he would have the University function as an institution of general learning. This has led him to neglect the proper development of the Institute of Jewish Studies. The situation in the University is further complicated by the petty jealousies and rivalries that exist among the members of the faculty.

* * *

Monday, December 14, 1931

When I wrote the foregoing I did not have the faintest notion that I was to be the guest of honor at the Hanukkah dinner which the Seminary students had arranged for last night. If I had the slightest suspicion of what was going to take place last night I would not have

spent any time writing in this journal but I would have been working on the address I had to give in accepting the honor to be bestowed on me. Yesterday morning Lena apprised me of the fact that she had known for some time that the dinner was to be given in my honor of my fiftieth anniversary, but she had promised to keep it a secret from me for fear that I might upset the plans of the students who were arranging it. They know how I hate and dread those functions, and they thought that the only way to assure my attendance was by springing the dinner as a surprise. I really do not know what would have happened to me if I had come totally unprepared. Lena could not have done a wiser and juster thing than to have informed me in time, although by doing that she broke the promise she had made to Harold Goldfarb, the chairman of the Students Committee who was in charge of the affair to keep the matter secret from me. If she hadn't told me I would probably have come away so discomfited from the affair that I would have been miserable for months to come.

Every one of the faculty was present except Adler and Levine. Adler sent a telegram of congratulations. Rabbis Burnstein, Goldman and Eisenstein sent in very warm letters of greeting. The speakers were Harold Goldfarb, Walter Robinson, Robert Gordis and Prof. Finkelstein and Aaron P. Drucker. Although most of what they had to say about me belonged to the type of inflated rhetoric which such occasions naturally call for, there was the ring of sincere friendship and appreciation to what each one said. Finkelstein went to great lengths to dilate upon how much he profited from his contact with me during the two or three years after his graduation from the Seminary. I could almost feel the way he was fighting an evil desire in himself to minimize my influence upon him. That is the only way I can account for the detailed and specific description he gave of his frequent visits to my house, and for the odd remarks that there are things one cannot say

in private that one can say in public. Such a remark seemed to imply that he was making a confession, as it were, a confession in which one takes violently ~~xxxxx~~ one's lower self and whips it like a dog till it goes off slinking in a corner. I know that Finkelstein has very fine qualities in him but unfortunately also a very strong "Yezer Ha-ra." How I can trust him if he doesn't trust himself?

All in all, however, last night's affair has had a purifying effect on me. It has purged me of a good deal of ill will that has been recently generated by my experience at the Rabbinical Assembly.

In my talk I made the point that I have been serving in the capacity of "Meturgeman" basing my remarks on the statement in Hagigah 24a (p.211) . As the forerunner of the Aggadist the Metargeman filled an important place in Jewish life. Every part of the passage in Hagigah from which that statement is taken fell in beautifully with the thought I developed and I concluded with the statement in Taanit .

I don't think I could have summed up my methodology better than by saying as I did in the course of those remarks that the two questions which I put to any statement or idea which is part of our tradition are: What does it imply? and How does it apply?

* * *

Wednesday, December 16, 1931

At the Seminary Faculty meeting which took place this afternoon Cyrus Adler drew a very gloomy picture of the financial status of the Seminary. The Seminary income has shrunk about $70,000 the last two years, and it appears that there will have to take place some very drastic reductions in expenditures and that very soon. He spoke about himself in a very pessimistic vein. He said in substance, that his health had been poor now for some time and he had been seriously considering asking for a leave of absence from the Seminary presidency.

Perhaps if a younger man were to take hold of it he might be able to tap new financial resources. He simply cannot get anyone to give.

What I can't understand is why there was not presented among the communications one from the students asking for another hour in Homiletics. When I scolded them two weeks ago for not preparing their work adequately Gordis at once drew up a petition which was immediately signed by the students present asking the Faculty to arrange for an additional hour in Homiletics. Shall I suspect foul play?

* * *

Friday, December 18, 1931

It was foolish of me to entertain such suspicion. That was almost an unconscionable error on my part and I hope it will teach me a lesson. The fact is, as I happened to learn yesterday, that the students have not yet handed in the petition because they are deliberating as to what hour they might ask for definitely in order that they might not be refused on the plea that all the hours are taken. They also wanted to make sure that I would consent to give an additional hour. The procrastination is thus altogether due to the students' failure to take action and to no one lese.

Last night at 6:30 I attended the second meeting of the Editorial Board of Opinion. The others present were James Wise, George Kohut, John S. Holmes, Smertenko and Beryl Levy. The meeting was called at my suggestion in order to discuss the details of format content, policy, etc.

* * *

Saturday night, December 19, 1931

Yesterday morning just as I was at the end of my night's sleep I dreamt I was trying to recite the Sabbath Kiddush and somehow could not get beyond the first few words. I then awoke and in

the half sleepy state I was in I was no more successful than before in trying to recall the entire text. Later, of course, I did manage to recall the whole of the kiddush, but I wasn't quite sure I was right because it struck me as peculiar that the last phrase should be a repetition of the opening phrase, the only change being from the third to the second person. When I took up a prayerbook and examined the text of the kiddush carefully I was struck by its redundancy and lack of form. I was reminded of the English text of the rabbinical diploma issued by the Seminary. The phrases hang together loosely and the only way to remember them is by throwing reason to the winds. Note the succession of sentences beginning with and then the concluding sentence (p.213) which merely repeats the sentence .

It is too bad that our liturgy makers were so inarticulate. And yet our phrase mongers keep on growing dithyrambic about our ancient sages whom they represent as having been imbued with almost superhuman wisdom and the art of expression. Ever since I have been thinking about Judaism I have been of the opinion that the Rabbis were of very ordinary mental calibre. Their memories were strong but they had no constructive imagination to speak of and next to nothing of self reliant reasoning. It seems that the Jews have been altogether overkind to their spokesmen. That probably accounts for the little intellectual progress made by the Jews as a people in the course of the eighteen centuries preceding the modern age.

One can observe this tendency reaching down to our times even in circles where one might expect something of the critical spirit. Schechter, e.g. is a very much exaggerated character. The straining to transform him into a legend is quite evident. There is so little of intrinsic value to his interpretation of Judaism that his admirers have to fall back continually upon his lion-like appearance and the food

drippings on his vest which they consider as evidence of his unself-consciousness. The truth is that he had a keen sense of humor and that he was very conscious of the impression which his appearance made upon observers. This lion like appearanceof his could be maintained only so long as he let his hair grow quite long and he or his wife had it carefully combed. He didn't like the idea of going to the barber to have it cut. This is why he would say before he went to the barber, "Now I am going to have my greatness cut off."

His only contribution to Jewish thought is his idealization of the Hassidic movement. In that respect he belongs to the group of Jewish writers during the last generation beginning with Peretz, Horodezki and Buber who were able to isolate what was good in that movement. But talking or writing about saints does not beget saintliness. Saintly living and saintly personality generate saintliness. Schechter was anything but a saint. Not being a prig does not make one a saint. Making it a habit to indulge in gossip does not ho with saintliness. He was aware that it was quite unethical and would pass it off with the joke "now let us enjoy ourselves by talking p.214.

The truth is that in his attempt to guide the course of Judaism he shifted the wrong gears. He promulgated unselfconsciousness as the method to be followed in the adjustment of Judaism to present day conditions and deliberate purpose in the cultivation of saintliness which of all attitudes toward life is the one least compatible with purposefulness.

God knows I do not want to belittle whatever actual power of insight and generosity of spirit he actually possessed. And he no doubt had a goodly measure of both coupled with sparkling wit. But nothing can be remoter from the truth than to speak of him, as Bentwich does in the closing sentence of the Arthur Davis Lecture, as "the inspired messenger of a living faith calling to loyalty."

My appraisal of him would be the following: Schecter was a striking Jewish personality typical of the present transition stage in Judaism. He demonstrated the ability of the Jew to transcend the intellectual and spiritual limitations of the Ghetto and to achieve a catholicity of taste and culture without destroying the basic energies inherent in the Jewish heritage. Western learning and contacts had the effect of bringing out the Jew in him to greater advantage. If Jews owe him their reorientation to Judaism less than they do Ahad Ha Am, learned Gentiles owe him more. If those Gentiles still regard Judaism as an exotic, Schechter has taught them to realize that it is a highly interesting one and possesses beauties they had never suspected. Most of the Western Jews who idolize him whether it be Montefiore, Jacobs or Marshall should be bracketed as far as their knowledge of Judaism is concerned, with these Gentiles.

* * *

Monday, December 21, 1931

Last night there met at my house ten young men ranging from the age of 25 to 32 who have been engaged in the field of Jewish education as their calling. Most of them are principals of schools and one or two are associated with the Bureau of Jewish Education. Among them was S. Dinin who teaches at the Teachers Institute and functions as registrar. The one who was the prime mover in getting these young men to meet with me was A. Eisenberg. In the conversation which he had with me a few weeks ago while we were having lunch in the Seminary cafeteria he complained to me very bitterly about the demoralization which is threatening the work of these men due to the fact that they have no older person to consult with to encourage and guide them in their work. The present economic depression has accentuated their sense of helplessness in the face of the havoc which prevails in the Hebrew schools and some of them are thinking seriously of abandonging the field altogether.

Dr. Benderly should have been the man to take an interest in them and in their problems, as he did some years ago with some of them. But he and they have been getting away from each other further and further. They would therefore like to turn to me for that leadership which they can not get from Dr. Benderly.

I consented to meet them and talk matters over. The first meeting took place last night. Besides the two I have named there were eight of whom I recall the following: Eli Ruffman, E. Picheny, David Rudavsky, M. Soloff, Hillel Goldberg, Judah Lapson, Joshua Sturn.

There was no time wasted, as is usually the case at initial gatherings, upon arriving at a common purpose satisfactory to everybody. Before long the discussion crystallized itself into the recognition of the need of taking the following steps as the first cooperative effort on the part of the group.

1. To send a letter to the Rabbinical Assembly asking for the appointment of a committee to meet with a committee of the Principals Organization of the JTA to formulate the respective duties and relationships of rabbis and principals in the matter of Jewish education.

The necessity for this step became evident as those present described the interference by most of the rabbis with the word done by the principals and the unethical spirit in which the former set themselves as educators when they know nothing about the conduct of a school.

2. To undertake a study of the present status of Jewish education from the standpoint of the opportunities it offers to those who want to take it up as a life calling and to those who already engaged in it.

The necessity for this arises from the apparent lack of

sufficient positions on the one hand and the encouragement given by training schools and Jewish educators to young people to take up Jewish education.

Tonight I listened to the talk given by Hans Kohn before the group which is being led by Edwin Samuel and which has now met for the third time at the home of Mrs. Jacobs.

Kohn sketched the nationalist movement among the Arabs. He described the movement as having received its impetus from the Russo-Japanese War, the Russian Revolution of 1905 and the Turkish Revolution of 1908. Britain and France are quite ready to allow the Arabs to achieve the unity and freedom they are seeking, provided they (England and France) can have control over the coastal countries. France needs the Christian Arabs of the Lebanon as a minority population to guard the French imperial interests in the Near East, and England needs the Jews of Palestine to do that for the British imperial interests. On the other hand the Arabs resent the French and British occupation of these coastal countries as interfering with the development of national unity and direct contact with European culture and commerce.

When he was through he was asked to point out the bearing of his analysis upon Zionist hopes. At first he demurred and said that he came with the understanding that he would not be asked to discuss Zionism. But since the question was asked, he felt he had to give some answer. It soon developed that there was a deep rift in sentiment and belief between him and the general body of Zionists. He displayed a good deal of passion in spite of his attempt to control himself when he touched upon the extravagant dreams of official Zionism. He definitely coupled the movement with Sabbatai Zebuism. He not only considers the possibility of the Jews ever getting a

majority as illusory but he regards the fact of such an objective being basic to all of the constructive and educational effort in Palestine as distorting the moral and spiritual outlook of the Jews who grow up in Palestine. To him the very idea of the Jews striving to be a majority people in Palestine must necessarily give rise to belligerency on the side of the Jews and of the Arabs.

When he began answering the questions he said that he differed with most people as to the nature of Judaism and although I tried to gather from the various replies he made some idea of his philosophy of Judaism I did not succeed. All I recall was that he attributed his views on Judaism to Tschernichowski. Berditschwsky and Buber, and that with Tchernichowski's he regarded the binding of Yahwah with the straps of the Tephilin the nemesis of Judaism. At this point he seemed to glorify physical prowess and military power, while in the rest of his remarks he seemed to voice extreme pacifism.

But although I was mystified by his discussion I became convinced by his main talk that we Jews are in an awful mess with prospects in Palestine no less than with our economic and spiritual prospects throughout the world. As I was walking home the thought occurred to me that the Jews have gotten themselves into such a tangle that by persisting to stand out as a distinct group they are contributing in no small measure to the conclusion that human life is the most senseless and meaningless phase of reality Such a conclusion is atheism. To be a Jew, therefore, is to further the cause of atheism. I do not care how wild and shocking these words may sound. They express exactly how I feel at this moment as I am still under the influence of the tragic spectacle that Hans Kohn presented to me tonight both in what he said about the nationalism of the Arabs and in his passionate condemnation of the Zionist futilities.

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Tuesday, December 22, 1931

Hans Kohn said that until the age of eighteen Judaism meant nothing to him because he had come from an assimilationist background. At every Christmas there was a Yle tree in his home and they sang Christmas songs. He ascribed his coming back to Judaism to two ~~xxxxxx~~ factors, one his coming across the allusions to the Jews contained in the writings of the ancient classic authors, the other an address by Buber. The classic authors seemed to him to speak of the Jews in the same vein as Houston Chamberlain. They were awed and repelled by them. That fact struck him as remarkable and awakened in him an interest in the Jews.

* * *

Friday, January 1, 1932

I returned last night from the mid-western lecture trip. I left for the West on Wednesday night, Dec. 23. Rabbi Solomon Goldman met me at the LaSalle Station at Chicago the next day and took me to the Covenant Club. The conversation turned first upon his work in Chicago where he had been the last two years or so. To all appearances he is still drawing large attendances at his Friday night lectures, Sunday morning classes in Hebrew and History. I gather not only from his own account but from what I heard about him from others that he is an outstanding figure in the Jewish life of Chicago and is making an appreciable dent in the hardened indifference to things spiritual on the part of the middle class Jews in that city. It is too bad that this has to be achieved at the price of publicity that often borders on the sensational and the theatrical. It is hard to say just how much of this sensationalism is due to his self-seeking and how much to the desire to get his purpose across. Not only is his own character a compound, but it is rendered complex by reason of his wife who probably goads him on to attain material success regardless of the vulgarity of the means employed.

I then directed the conversation toward the main purpose I had wanted to see him about. The first question I put to him was: "Why do you show so little interest in the Rabbinical Assembly?" His answer which I had expected, was that he found it impossible to work with the men in it because they displayed no interest in the general problem of Judaism. He illustrated his point by telling me of his experience some years ago with some of the men. He went out one summer to Vermont and there found a whole colony of Seminary men including Prof. Ginzberg, Levinthal, Solomon, Epstein, et al. Ginzberg's son Eli arranged a symposium on Judaism. Every one of the Seminary graduates delivered a short talk which consisted for the most part of some warmed over sermon hash. The professor, of course, did not attend. But Eli reported to him that the only one who seemed to have said anything worthwhile was Goldman and he repeated to his father the substance of Goldman's remarks. The next day the professor called in Goldman to tell him that it was inadvisable to air one's views too frankly and bluntly in the public. In spite of the professor's objection Goldman managed the next day to get into a heated debate with the other men concerning Judaism. While the discussion was going on they seemed very much interested. Just then they noticed Levinthal coming up from the direction of the lake on which he had been rowing and they hailed him. "We were having a grand discussion here with Goldman," they said to him. "I thought you were working on the holiday sermons," Levinthal replied. "That's the only thing that bothers me just now." "You're right," they said and forthwith lost all interest in the problem of Judaism.

When I saw that there was little chance of Goldman urging some modus vivendi with the Rabbinical Assembly and the United Synagogue I spoke to him of the plan I had had in mind of calling a conference of rabbis, educators, social workers for the purpose of launch-

ing Reconstructionist program. At the time I had not yet conceived the idea of preparing the platform before the conference; that idea developed within the next few days as I was discussing the plan with the other rabbis whom I tried to interest in the movement. Goldman seemed very eager to cooperate and promised to get up a list of names and to try to fit the date and the place of the conference. I wonder whether he will keep his promise.

* * *

Sunday, January 3, 1932

I got to Kansas City Friday (Dec. 25) and was met at the station by Gershon Hadas. He was quite interested in the projected move, but of much more immediate concern to him was the problem of making the synagogue service interestinb by enriching the liturgy with material that would articulate our present day spiritual needs. I was so glad to find him experiencing sesne of need that I promised to take up the problem of the liturgy immediately upon my return.

I spoke Friday night at the services to a congregation of about 700 people. The next morning I preached a short sermon. In the afternoon Rabbi (he objects to being called Rabbi) Max Breton, the Executive Secretary, came over to see me. He is a graduate of the HUC with the class of 1924 and occupied a pulpit in Chicago for four years. He did not find rabbinical work altogether to his liking and changed for social work. He finds himself entirely in accord with the conception of Judaism as a civilization. He wanted me, however, to tell him whether from that standpoint it was proper for him to introduce into the YMHA program items of general interest like musical performances by various artists, and lectures dealing with topics not specifically Jewish. I gave him my blessing and told him that it was not the content that mattered so much as the spirit in which the man who directed the work.

In the evening Hadas and his wife drove me over to Katz who is among the richest Jews in that city. He is the owner of a drug store chain in that city and has managed to hold his own against such powerful interests as Liggets and the United Cigar Stores. He was brought to this country from Shavel, Russia as a youngster of eight and can hardly be said to be thoroughly Americanized. Intellectually he seems to rate quite low, but I suppose he possesses a good deal of the business aggressiveness necessary for success in this country. He is a generous giver and is associated with religious and charitable institutions. The congregation of which Hadas is Rabbi would probably have been unable to exist if it were not for Katz's liberal support. Like other congregations which built far beyond their means Hadas' congregation is heavily mortgaged and Hadas has to spend a great deal of time and energy raising money. It is due to the energy with which Hadas has pursued this task that it has been possible for the congregation to scrape together $1000 per week to meet its bills.

Katz moved over recently into a new home built by one of the richest oil well owners of the region. The oil magnate has been hard pressed for cash and he sold the house to Katz for a fraction of its cost. Nor was any cost spared in its construction. A highly trained architect was engaged to draw up the plans and he drew on the architecture of the finest English homes for suggestions. There is a summer house and a self-playing organ, and a flower garden of extraordinary beauty. But the Katzs seem as yet unused to all that luxury nor is there the least expression of personal taste or culture to give atmosphere to the place. The pictures are all copies of well known masterpieces and all that the former owner left of his library are a few sets of books like the World's Best Orations and 19th century novels.

The problem which now troubles Mrs. Katz or rather which did trouble her for a while is how she could continue to observe Kashrut in view of the many additional servants she has to take on. It was probably her mother who made her observe Kashruth till now, but now, she told R. Hadas, she found it too burdensome.

At eight o'clock I met about 35 or 40 people at one of the rooms of Hadas's synagogue who discussed with me the lecture of the night before. The discussion lasted to eleven o'clock, and judging by the fact that it was I who had to break it up, I infer that it was quite interesting.

Both at this discussion and at the lecture there was present the lawyer Ottenberg (or perhaps Achtenberg) whom I had met at the office of Michelson, and about whom Hadas had told me stories that made my hair stand. Ottenberg was at one time president of the congregation (Keneset Israel) and it was he who was mainly responsible for having inveigled the congregation into a heavy building program at the time that Herman Cohen was the rabbi. There is good ground for believing that considerable funds intended for the building were divested by Ottenberg for his own uses. A few weeks after Hadas became rabbi he received a hurry call from that man. When Hadas arrived Ottenberg told him that he was associated with some insurance enterprise and that he had taken $5000 from the funds of the company. The state investigators were just then going over the accounts and were bound to learn of what he did. Unless he were furnished with that money he would land in the penitentiary. Hadas realizing what a stench that would cause in the general community, and the disgrace that exposure would bring upon the Jewish community, worked very hard to get that money. Finally the money was secured after Ottenberg had solemnly pledged himself to pay it off. When the creditors later asked him for payment he had the impudence to refuse and said to them

that they would dare bring him to law because they would then be prosecuted for collusion in fraud.

This Ottenberg wheedled out about $3000 from R. Herman Cohen when the latter was still in Kansas City. This is a matter of over four years. Cohen has made trips from St. Paul to Kansas City on the solemn assurances that Ottenberg would give him some money, and each time he came Ottenberg always found some new excuse.

Yet this man is at large, comes to services and takes part in discussions about religion and civilization as though he were the most honorable in all his dealings. His wife is a very able woman and takes a leading part in cultural and Zionist work. In all my experience I have not come across such an anomalous case.

Greenberg whom I met again does not seem to be much more of account than when I first met him. Hartzfeld who is now a man of 60 married a second time. This time he married a Gentile woman. She would not even consent to having a Reform rabbi officiate at the wedding. Whereas formerly he was very much interested in Judaism and Zionism - having attended the Zionist Congress and having contributed a considerable sum to the Keren Hayesod - he has now cut himself off completely from Jewish life.

I left Kansas City Sunday, Dec. 27 at 9:00 and arrived at Omaha at 3:00. I was met at the station by Rabbi David Goldstein and two of his active members, Klotznik and Kulakovsky (?) a brother-in-law of R. Herman Cohen

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Monday, January 4, 1932

Originally I was scheduled to give the lecture on The New Approach to Judaism at a dinner that was to have been held under the auspices of Rabbi Goldstein's congregation. But unfortunately Harry Lapidus, the outstanding Jew of the town who had been one of the main

organizers and supporters of the congregation had been killed a few days before I arrived at Omaha.

Thursday, January 7, 1932

This necessitated the cancellation of the dinner at which I was to have given my lecture. Since, however, I had to pass through Omaha anyhow I thought I might stop off and talk things over with Goldstein.

I gathered from the conversation with him that he was quite happy in his work. His congregation was formed about three or four years ago by a number of young people who could not worship with their parents in the Orthodox synagogue and would have found themselves out of place in the Reform Temple. The congregation calls itself Conservative. In fact it is designated as such officially. They have no synagogue of their own and occupy quarters at the communal center. Goldstein, like Hadas, voiced the need of new liturgical content for the services. When I mentioned to him the plan of organizing a new group with a definitely Reconstructionist program he was elated and expressed his readiness to cooperate.

In the evening he invited a few people to dinner. I there met a young lawyer by the name Beber who together with Klotznick inaugurated under the auspices of the Bnai Brith the movement among young people known as the AZA. I was happy to learn that in many cities that movement has made considerable headway, and that its program calls for an intensification of Jewishness.

After dinner an additional number of people whom the Goldstein's had invited to meet me arrived. The number grew to about thirty. The one about whose coming Goldstein seemed to make something of a fuss was Harry Monsky. He seems to be rather wealthy and influential but on the downward slope of Judaism. His wife is probably the cause of his growing indifference. She is a faddist in religion and anxious to break away from Jewish life. It was she who in the

discussion that followed my informal remarks wanted to know "Why should Jews resist being assimilated?"

I cannot say that I enjoyed the experience of an informal talk and discussion which I knew had to be cut short on account of my having to catch the 9:30.

I arrived at Minneapolis on Monday morning at about 9:00 and was met at the train by Rabbi A. I. Gordon. He too seemed happy in his work although his congregation is in financial difficulties. It seems that the men out West are more successful in making themselves felt in their communities than those who hold positions in the East. Perhaps their remoteness from the Seminary has a good deal to do with their happiness. They feel much freer to make changes and express their views on religion than they would be if they had positions within the vicinity of the Seminary.

When Magnes was recently in Minneapolis he organized there a Society of Friends of the Hebrew University. When they learned that I was to come to Minneapolis they asked me to meet them at luncheon and to give them a talk on the University. I did not know what I could say about the University that they hadn't heard from Magnes, or from Hans Kohn who had addressed them only a few weeks ago. On the other hand, I couldn't very well refuse the invitation to speak at the luncheon. I, therefore, gave the talk on "The Changing Functions of Religion" (see above) under the pretext that it was a sort of University extension lecture and thus afforded the Hebrew University an opportunity to function educationally in the Diaspora. There were forty people present. Among them were 12 physicians, 7 lawyers and four rabbis. The rabbis were Gordon, Aaronson and Herman Cohen and an Orthodox rabbi whose name I can't think of. This Orthodox rabbi heckled me in the discussion after my talk and tried to pin me down to an avowal of heresy. I think that the talk was successful although I doubt whether those present really got the drift of it.

In the evening I gave my address on "A New Approach to Judaism" to an audience of about four hundred. That too was successful.

On Tuesday Herman Cohen took charge of me. He arranged a luncheon meeting for me with a group of leading Zionists in St. Paul. There were about twenty of them and they met over a cheap ~~kaka~~ restaurant in the Jewish neighborhood. Originally I wanted to repeat my talk on the Changing Functions, but luckily I changed my mind in time and talked on Zionism. I spoke about the need of revizing the Zionist program both for Palestine and the Diaspora. The material for the first part of my talk I got from the talk Hans Kohn gave before Edwin Samuels' group.

I spent the greater part of the afternoon in the compnay of Rabbi Herman Cohen, Aaronson and Dr. Gordon. In the evening I gave the same address as the night before, but as the address came before a dinner I felt that it called for a different form of presentation. It proved even more successful than on the two previous occasions.

(I forgot to mention that at Minneapolis after the luncheon meeting Dr. Gordon, the physician who organized the Talmud Torah and who is now its principal discussed with me the curriculum. The three departments of the TT are (p.224) and which represent respectively courses of five, three and two years. They have over 40 students now in the . The students acquire an intensive love of Jewish knowledge. Recently Gordon introduced in the courses in English for those who find it difficult to acquire an adequate knowledge of Hebrew. Those who take these courses learn much more about Jewish life than those who take the courses in Hebrew. This is due to the fact that the Hebrew teachers are not interested in adjusting their pupils to life, but merely in transmitting to them a knowledge of the Hebrew language and literature. The result is that many pupils in the Hebrew courses ask to be

transferred to the English courses.)

On Wednesday I stopped off at Madison, Wisconsin on my way to Chicago, to visit the Kadushins. Kadushin finds his work interesting but he and his wife find themselves very much alone spiritually. He gave me to read the first part of his introduction to his translation of Elyaha Rabba. I was glad to find that it contained an original idea that had far reaching implications. I refer to his idea that rabbinic ideology should not be evaluated by the standards of logical thinking because as folk thinking it is organismic. In his conversation he continually reiterated the fact that he got the suggestion for this idea from me, but I failed to note any such acknowledgment in his introduction. Solomon Goldman whose first paper in his "A Rabbi Takes Stock" is based entirely upon my "Toward a Reconstructionism" and other Menorah essays of mine at least acknowledges a certain amount of indebtedness in a note at the back of the book. But, of course, all this is nonsense. It doesn't make a particle of difference where men get their ideas. The main thing is to get ideas to function by translating their implications into life. And this I am just as far from doing as those who have adopted my jargon.

At Chicago I was met by Drs. Dushkin and Honor with whom I had dinner at the Covenant Club. I unfolded my plan about the Reconstructionist group. In discussing it with them, I became clearer in my own mind as to the method of procedure. The main point in the plan is that instead of calling a conference to formulate a platform, the platform will be drawn up beforehand and only those who will be ready to subscribe to it will be asked to attend the conference.

* * *

Friday, January 8, 1932

At the last meeting of the Seminary Faculty, a little over three weeks ago Adler indicated that drastic cuts in Seminary and

Teachers Institute expenditures would have to be made in the beginning of this year. During my absence from the city Adler had a conference with Ginzberg representing the Seminary Faculty, Marx the library staff, Dinin representing the TI Faculty and office staff and Finkelstein and apprised them of the reductions in the salaries. Both the Seminary and Library came off with a 10% reduction. The Teachers Institute is in doubt. Oppenheimer, the Treasurer, has been trying hard to get me to consent to a 15% reduction or to dismiss some of the teachers. I have consented to neither.

I learned from Finkelstein yesterday that amonth before the financial crash in November 1929 Rosenwald, who had offered $500,000 to the Seminary, provided the Board would raise the additional money it needed, urged that the campaign be launched at once because the wave of prosperity would not last very long. That the campaign was not started was due mainly to Felix M. Warburg who realized that he would have to make a considerable contribution to the Seminary fund.

I am afraid that by pushing the resolution of the Rabbinical Assembly to present a platform for adoption at the coming convention I am only playing into Finkelstein's hands. Having been responsible for its presentation at the ~~xxxxx~~ last convention and having saved it from being squashed by the Executive Committee I had a right to expect to be appointed chairman of the committee to formulate the program. But Finkelstein stole a march on me and got Levinthal to appoint him. He did this right in my presence. He deliberately asked him for the chairmanship of the program committee suggesting at the same time that I accept the chairmanship of the committee on Law. He knew full well that I wouldn't consent to act as chairman of that committee because I hold views about ritual law that preclude my effectiveness on that committee.

* * *

Saturday night, January 9, 1932

Last Thursday afternoon one of the Seminary students, Sandrow, came into my office at the Teachers Institute, ostensibly to talk about a sermon outline which he had handed in, but in reality, I believe, to get off his chest some of his discontent with the spirit of the Seminary. He told me about the talk Dr. Adler had delivered to the students at the Seminary last Monday incidentally to the abandonment of the old Seminary building on 123 Street and the taking up of quarters at the Unterberg Memorial Building.

It is only because there is very little of soul in the entire institution that the change could have been effected with the equanimity that seemed to prevail among faculty and students. Adler probably did give expression to sentiments of regret. But if there had ever been real spirit in the institution a serious effort should have been made to continue using the building until it would be replaced by a more suitable one. That building has become the center of many joyous and sad associations to many young people and to all of us who have done work in it. If the trustees had any heart they would have thought twice before urging its abandonment.

Adler used that occasion which he had to address the students also for the purpose of speaking to them about their duty to observe the Sabbath strictly. His attention had been called to the fact that some students turn on the lights on Friday night and drop coins in the telephone slot machines on the Sabbath for the purpose of telephoning. He condemned such actions as violations of the Sabbath. When he was asked why he presses the button when he wants to use the elevator or some other questions of that kind, he admitted that he was unable to give a clear and satisfactory answer. At least this is what Sandrow said, and I may well believe him. Adler also admitted that he was less strict in his observance when he was young. I

understand that when pressed to express to explain the inconsistency in some of his own observances he had to fall back upon the fact that some of the members of the Faculty object to the failure of the students to conform to strict Orthodox practice.

I preached today on the "Yearning for the Miraculous." The point I made was that although we cannot possibly regard the recorded miracles in the Bible as historical, there is an irrepressible yearning for the miraculous which should not be frustrated. It can find its fulfillment in the fact of creativity which is due to the whole being more than the sum of its parts and to the principle of catalysis. This, of course, means reconstruction in the idea of God as the factor of totality and creativity in the universe.

I have felt quite depressed these last two days. Is there anything wrong with my glands or hormones? For otherwise I am in physically good condition. I have every reason to be contented in spite of the reduction in salary. A year ago at this time I had an attack of grippe which left after effects that lasted until quite recently. Now those after effedts seem to behardly perceptible. Then why am I so downhearted? I think it is due to the overwhelming sense of futility that overcomes me whenever I realize how irrelevant all my efforts to reconstruct Judaism are. If I do not succeed in my own home to make Judaism live, if it means so little to my own children, what can I expect of other homes and the children of other people. My Judith has been engaged to a young lawyer, Albert Addelston, for more than two years. Apart from the fact that he has to work hard merely to get his office experience, he has to be in the office on Saturdays. Judith herself has to take courses at college on Saturday morning. Today she came home all thrilled by the work she had seen being done

at the preparatory music schools on Saturday mornings, and during dinner she remarked to Naomi and Selma, "You don't know what you missed by not attending the Saturday morning sessions in the preparatory school." At once Naomi's eyes filled with tears in resentment of the restraint which Judaism imposed upon her, and Selma uttered protest against our having deprived her of an educational opportunity. I suppressed my own rising anger against Judith, and in all calmness asked her "How much more educated musically she would have been even if she had taken work Saturday mornings at the preparatory school.

This evening another incident of a similar character upset me. When I was called in for supper I said "Let us have Habdallah." "But Pearl (the maid) is frying eggs and they will get cold if we have Habdallan now" said Lena. When she went into the kitchen I remarked to the children "If I wouldn't remind you each week about Habdallah you wouldn't think of it." "To tell you the truth, we didn't miss it" Judith snapped back.

With this kind of attitude at home, with the unimaginative and narrow minded outlook of my colleagues at the Seminary, with Finkelstein's maneouverings to seize the reins of authority, with the Seminary graduates beset with the petty problems of congregational organization and obsessed with the fears of not being reelected, with the Seminary students daily having their ideas more and more befuddled and their actual or potential idealism forever squelched by the Seminary policies, and with the SAJ being bereft of all purpose except that of making a few hundred dollars by selling theater tickets in order to pay its current expenses, I feel that my life is just one sheer waste and that nothing I can do along the lines of effort in which I have been engaged all these years can redeem it from sterility.

I am especially confirmed in this sense of futility when I read and think about the stupendous experiment in intelligent living

that is now going on in Russia. How puny and childish the efforts even of the most prominent thinkers and reformers in this country of men like John Jewey and Norman Thomas -- are when compared with the thoroughness and comprehensiveness of the socialization process in Russia. I may be mistaken but to me Russia appears as the paradise of the spiritual life. Everywhere else to anyone who is at all sensitive to the absurdities of our economic, political and religious institutions life is a veritable spiritual hell, for there can be no greater torture to the spirit than the realization that the best one does is like sowing among thorns. Hindus' Humanity Uprooted has helped to make me keenly aware of my rootlessness.

Perhaps I am inconsiderate when I charge my colleagues with being narrow and unimaginative. Their deliberate decision to wear mental blinkers, as it were, and to shut out all unpleasant facts from their mind is probably due to their wanting to escape the horrible feeling of futility which must overcome anyone who sees and thinks too much about what is going on.

* * *

Monday, January 11,1932

I am having Eisenstein work out the program for the new move to organize a Council for the Reconstruction of Judaism. I am having him combine parts of the report which Dushkin drew up four years ago of the conference I attended in Chicago with the hope of organizing there an SAJ council, together with some of the statements contained in my pamphlet on "Toward a Reconstruction etc" and some of the ideas I developed recently.

After we were through discussing the program our conversation drifted to the rabbinate as a calling. He agreed with me when I pointed out that with the growing tendency to eliminate from social life all non-productive effort the future of the rabbinate is anything

but promising. He referred to the fact that Rabbi Fisher of Arverne was taking courses in Teachers College that will enable him to teach English in High School. Fisher, he said, is driven to do this not only because of the insecurity of the rabbinate, but also because of the intolerable fanaticism of his congregants who watch every move and utterance of his lest he swerve from the line of strict Orthodoxy. It hurt me to hear Eisenstein speak regretfully about himself deploring the fact that he is completely dependent upon the rabbinate for his livelihood. "People," he said "speak of Christianity being a religion about Jesus. The same is true with the people who come to our synagogue. The only want to hear about Judaism, but will do nothing to acquire or live Judaism itself."

I attended at noon the first meeting of the Special Committee on Program of the Rabbinical Assembly. The others present were Finkelstein, chairman, Greenstone, Levinthal, Eugene Kohn and Greenberg (of Philadelphia). Finkelstein proposed that the program take the form of a collection of papers giving the representative attitudes toward the main concepts and institutions of Jewish life. I had to leave before the meeting was over, but from the nature of the initial proposal it is evident that the program I am working on for the Reconstructionist group is in no way a duplication of the Rabbinical Assembly Program. The latter will merely emphasize the range of diversity in belief and practice; the former will stress the ideas and purposes held in common by a group of rabbis, educators, communal administrators and interested laymen. The former is to be merely an iremic document the latter is to lay down lines of constructive action.

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to discuss Jewish life from the standpoint of the Council's ideology and to be syndicated to the Anglo-Jewish press. In order to facilitate the work that committee should prepare a questionnaire for the purpose of ascertaining what each member of the Council would be interested to write on.

The final matter taken up was the program of the conference. The decision was that it be conducted in the following manner: There are to be three sessions on the first day and two on the second. The first session is to be opened by Dushkin with a report of the Arrangements committee. After that I am to give a summary of my article on the New Orientation. The rest of the session is to be devoted to the discussion of the article. The other eight articles should be summarized by their respective authors and discussed during the second, third and fifth sessions. The fourth session on the morning of Jan. 3 should be devoted entirely to questions of organization and implementation.

None but those invited should be allowed to participate in the discussions.

My colleagues felt that I ought to act as chairman throughout the conference in order to avert the problem of handing out honors. But I will insist upon their meeting that problem in some other way than by placing upon me the entire burden of presiding.

Rabbi Brickner, Ezra Shapiro, Nate Engelman and Abe Rubin, all of Cleveland, are to be asked to make the necessary arragnements preparatory to holding the conference in their city.

Israel Chipkin as Educational Director of the Jewish Education Association has had occasion to have first hand experience of the shameless refusal on the part of the philanthropic Jewish assimilationists to continue even their measly and grudging support of Jewish educational work. Vogelstein who is the president of the Union of American

Hebrew Congregations boasts of the fact that he succeeded in closing the Hebrew schools which the Union had been conducting in the poorer sections of the city. Arthur Lehman who had been contributing $200 annually to the JEA wrote that he was bound to limit his contributions to relief work. The N.Y. Federation of Jewish Philan. Institutions discriminated against the Jewish educational institutions by cutting their budget 40% as compared with the 25% cut in the work of the relief institutions. (The total contribution to the latter is $185,000. as compared with about $3,500,000 I believe for relief work.) In the case of the Central Jewish Institute they are reducing the budget 50% necessitating Albert Schoolman's resignation. (Schoolman is one of our gropp who has been heading the CJI for a number of years and doing most excellent work). Incidentally it is interesting that the cut in the Bureau of Jewish Education, which Benderly conducts has received only a cut of about 22%. This is due to the influence he has with Vogelstein and to his close contact with the Federation Committee that is in charge of the budgeting.

Similar to Chipkin's experience in N.Y. is Dushkin's experience in Chicago. After having succeeded at the meeting with Chicago Federation representatives last June in getting some allotment for Jewish education work, the assimilationists in Federation are making another vigorous effort against Jewish education. They have sent out questionnaires to their members asking whether they were in favor of retaining Jewish education in the budget. It seems that the questionnaire has designedly been sent out these days when Dushkin is away from Chicago and those who might vote "Yes" are scattered and likely to neglect sending in their vote.

There is no doubt that the philanthropic assimilationists who were talked into consenting to have Jewish education as part of Federation work, but who really have been opposed to any form of Jewish

cultural work, are taking advantage of the present depression to display their true attitude toward that kind of work. They have raised the cry "Bread before education." It is evident that if the mischief they are doing is not to be protested against the effort to make Jewish cultural activities part of a Jewish communal program will have to be begun all anew. In the meantime the letter that has been built up in the way of permanent values and personall with which to carry on the cultural activities is being completely shattered.

This condition prevails at the present time also in the congregations of this country. The educational activities are being eliminated, he rabbis are not having their salaries paid or are being dismissed altogether. Many of the religious schools are being turned over to the teachers or discontinued altogether. The strange point of it all is that it doesn't seem to occur to any of the supposedly non-assimilationist Jews that something must be done to put a halt to the inroads being made into Jewish life by the philanthropic assimilationists.

Among the things he told me was the fact that the Covenant Club may have to sell out and may be acquired by a group most of whom are members of the club, for the purpose of turning it into a Jewish Center with Goldman to head it. The president of the club is a man by the name of Harrison, I believe, who is also vice president of Godlman's synagogue. Goldman has had considerable influence on Harrison and his family in the way of getting their boy to take up Jewish studies and to make their household kasher. It seems that Goldman is very able in making interesting contacts and in eliciting an active interest in Jewish life from people who are worthwhile. As a result of his influence on this Mr. Harrison, Goldman is likely to have the first real opportunity of giving the Jewish Center idea in this country a fair trial. It was my misfortune to entrust that idea to a fanatic like Joseph H. Cohen who was interested in miling his group of friends for the Beth Israel hospital. Rabbi I. Levinthal of Brooklyn and H. Abramovitz of Montreal have had the Center ida foisted upon them. They have never had the least understanding of its social and religious implications. Then again it may be that the mistake with all of the synagogue centers has been the very fact that they originated as synagogues. That prejudiced the people against the use of the center facilities. They regard every activity conducted in the center either as religion or as a means of inveighing them into religion, and nowadays that is enough for alienating most people. As a matter of fact this is why many Jews are prejudiced against Jewish life. They believe it is nothing if not religion. If they could only be gotten to realize that Jewish life is essentially social and cultural they would at least give it a hearing. On the other hand, if Goldman will take over an institution like the Covenant Club which is free of the handicap that a synagogue labors under, he might really demonstrate the value and effectiveness of the Center idea.

In the recent Thompson-Cermak mayoralty contest in Chicago the late Julius Rosenwald was drawn into the campaign when Thompson's opponents published a statement Rosenwald had made a long time ago in derogation of Thompson. When T. learned of it he let loose a flood of abuse against Rosenwald. It was taken for granted that the two Negro districts of Chicago would surely help to defeat Thompson because of his attack against Rosenwald who had done so much for them. At the election, however, the Negro districts gave Thompson a big majority.

Goldman had refused to come out in favor of either candidate, not even for Cermak who was supposed to represent the more liberal elements. He was very much revolted by the spectacle of the Jews allowing their Judaism and their Zionism to be exploited by the politicians. Yet he was afraid of denouncing the actions of our people while the campaign was going on, because he was afraid that no matter how careful he would be in stating the case, one or the other group of politicians would make capital of what he might say, even if they had to garble his words. But as soon as the elections were over he came out with a sermon entitled "Judaism on Sale." In the course of the sermon he referred to Rosenwald's part in the campaign and to the ingratitude shown him by the colored people. He used this fact to point the lesson that the Jew who goes out of his way to contribute his money to non-Jewish causes at the expense of Jewish causes in the end gets no thanks for his trouble. And he went on to say that although Rosenwald was known as a bitter opponent of Zionism, yet if the Zionists were faced with an issue similar to that which confronted the colored people they would have stood on the side of Rosenwald. It certainly was a courageous thing for Goldman to do because no Jew in Chicago dared breathe a word of criticism against Rosenwald.

When R. heard of what Goldman had said about him he was already confined to bed by the illness from which he died. Yet he had

his wife call up Goldman to ask for the copy of the sermon, and through his secretary thanked G for it and expressed the hope of seeing him when he would recover. From conversations reported to G by a certain Barney Balaban, one of the Jewish big movie magnates which the latter had had with R it seemed that R was quite well acquainted with the type of Judaism that had become associated with my name and that Goldman had been preaching. It is too bad that he died before learning more about the new approach to the entire conception of Judaism. He was apparently a very intelligent man and a seeker after the truth. His negative attitude was due almost entirely to the baneful influence of the late Emil Hirsch.

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Thursday, August 11, 1932

With Golub, Honor and Chipkin arriving today we were able to start the main business which brought me here. These men together with Goldman, Dushkin and myself met at one of the rooms in the main building of the Boys' camp and discussed the good part of the afternoon and evening the plans for the coming conference of the Council for the Advancement of Judaism.

The discussion opened with the question "What should constitute the irreducible minimum to which all who are invited should be asked to subscribe?" I quoted the following five principles which I had worked out in addition to the tentative platform: 1) Emphasis upon the maximum of Jewishness compatible with the American environment. 2) Reaffirmation of the national status of world Jewry. 3) Reaffirmation of the centrality of religion in Jewish life. 4) Integration of social idealism into the program of Jewish thought and organization. 5) Widening of the unity of Israel to make room for diversity of belief and practice.

The third principle proved to be a snag. Golub wanted religion to be understood as a synonym of social idealism and therefore did

not favor the special mention of it. Goldmanxx suggested that if we were going to retain the term we must state specifically what we mean by it. Goldman's suggestion was adopted. It was further suggested that to avoid misunderstanding the term national would also have to be defined.

Golub then read his formulation of the irreducible minimum. It contained principles dealing with the practical expression of our philosophy of Jewish life. I undertook to work out a synthesis of Golub's and my own formulation.

The discussion then turned upon the question: How is the Council for the Advancement of American Jewish Life (it was agreed that this name was to replace the one used till now) to function? As a conferring organization or as a promoting organization? The decision arrived at was that at first it would have to devote itself to the formulation and clarification of the ideology. In time it would sek to lobby the various Jewish organizations with the view of getting them to regulate their activities in accordance with that ideology. The third step would be to organize all the forces in American Jewish life, individual and collective, that are in sympathy with that ideology.

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Friday, August 12, 1932

It was decided that a number of papers be prepared for the coming conference by different men dealing with application of the ideology to specific phases of the problem of Jewish life and that these papers are to be published as a symposium in book form. The following is the list of topics and of those who are to write on them:

The American Jewish Scene	- Goldman - Kaplan
A New Orientation	- Kaplan - Goldman
A United Israel	- S.S. Wise - Morris D. Waldman
Palestine and America	- Emanuel Neumann - I.B. Berkson

The Jewish School of Tomorrow - J. Golub - Leo L. Honor

The Synagogue of Tomorrow - Kadushin-Gluckesman-Schoolman

Organization of American Jewish Life - Alex Dushkin - Maurice J. Karpf

The Jewish Home - Israel Chipkin - John Slawson

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From the discussion of the preceding it emerged that the subsequent volumes would have to consist of symposia which would take up in detail most of the foregoing topics. It was felt that the problem of the economic status of the Jew ought to be the theme of one of these symposia.

I proceeded to compare my formulation of the irreducible minimum with Golub's for the purpose of working out a synthesis of the two and I found that the Tentative Platform contains a synthesis which can scarcely be improved upon. All that is necessary is to eliminate the few statements which are likely to call forth opposition on the part of men who are fully qualified to cooperate with us.

We met this morning for about an hour and a half. The discussion led to the following changes in the contemplated symposium:

The Synagogue of Tomorrow - Eugene Kohn - B. Brickner

The Jewish Center - Glucksman - A. Schoolman

Organization of American Jewish Life - Dushkin - Sam Goldsmith

The Jewish Home - I. Chipkin - Gamoran - Slawson

The Future of Jewish Social Service - B. Selekman - M.J.Karpf

The title of the symposium is to be "Toward a Creative Judaism."

Dushkin is to get in touch with Neumann, Goldsmith, Selekman and Karpf; Goldman with Eugene Kohn, Brickner, Slawson; Chipkin with Gamoran; Honor with Glucksman and Schoolman; and I with Wise and Waldman.

The question of an irreducible minimum basis for cooperation was obviated entirely first by our agreeing that the Council shall not commit itself, for the present at least, to any platform; what I formulated as Tentative Platform should be considered as my own personal statement "Toward a New Jewish Orientation," which should be referred to as having given the stimulus to the calling of the conference and as representing on the whole the attitude of the committee in calling the conference; secondly, by my agreeing to change pars. 4 and 5 on page 2 of the Tentative Platform in conformity with the objections raised against their present form. I also agreed to include in Part II of the T. Platform a more emphatic reference to the fostering of Hebrew as indispensable to Jewish life in this country.

It was decided that the place of the conference was to be Cleveland and the date Jan. 2-3, 1933.

* * *

Sunday, August 14, 1932

We met again on Friday afternoon for about an hour and a half. We discussed the organization of the Council. The following decisions were arrived at:

1. At the January conference a Committee on Organization should be appointed to bring in a plan which is to be discussed at the morning conference of the second day.

2. The important committees to be appointed at the conference are the following:

a) An Editorial Committee to edit the articles of the Symposium; b) a Committee on Summer Institutes to get in touch with one or two of the outstanding universities for the purpose of conducting summer courses to be led by the members of the Council; c) a Syndicate Committee to get an article a week from the membership. The article is

Wednesday, January 13, 1932

Last Monday during the few minutes recess between the first and second period of the course I am giving at the Training School for Jewish Social Workers I stepped in to Maurice Karpf's office to congratulate him on his recent election to the presidency of the American Association of Social Workers. He was very glad that I took note of the honor accorded him. He mentioned the fact that the election implied the recognition of the Training School. This was a moral victory for him as well as for the school, because only a few years ago Chicago University and other university training schools refused to recognize the Training School as of sufficiently high standard on the ground that it was not attached to a university. This objection was now overcome.

In the course of our brief conversation he referred to the Seminar course he had arranged to conduct in his home bi-weekly beginning with last night, and invited me to attend. I didn't promise to attend because I usually devote Tuesday nights to preparing for my classes at the Seminary the day following, but I said I would try. Incidentally, I asked him to give me a copy of his book "The Scientific Basis of Social Work" which was published recently. When he showed me the book about two weeks ago and I asked him for it he didn't think I would be interested in it because it was technical in character. I didn't insist upon his giving it to me, but now that there was the likelihood of my attending the Seminars at which the discussion would turn upon his book, I felt I ought to read it up before I came.

On the surface all that I state in the foregoing paragraph seems to be too trivial to deserve writing up with such detail. But the fact is that this interest in social work which is evidenced in my desire to attend the Seminar and to read Karpf's book is due to my ceaseless searching and striving to identify myself with work which

might in some way condition a desirable future, no matter on how limited a scale. I cannot bear to think of allowing the mental and physical energies I possess to be wasted on activities that are totally useless and fruitless. It is this urge to be of actual use to the world that now and then leads me to believe that perhaps I might find an outlet in social work. I would even be willing to acquire the necessary training if I were sure I could learn it to a sufficient degree to be able to be of service in it. Anyhow these are my daydreams to which I escape once in a while from the nightmare of futility.

But they must be more than passive daydreams if they could have made me go last night to Karpf's home after a strenuous day during which I attended a meeting of the Seminary Faculty(which is always more or less of an ordeal) and at the one time in the week when I never permit anything to interfere with my preparation for the classes on Wednesday. Now am I sorry that I went. I really enjoyed the discussion which was carried on a high plane and which taught me one or two things as it no doubt did every one present. I prefer that kind of discussion to the desultory palaver and small talk carried on even at a social gathering of intellectuals. There is more effort involved, it seems to me, in getting away from the subjects one is vitally interested in than in sticking to them, and my idea of having a good time is relaxation and not effort. It is because most people apparently detest the work they do that they get their relaxation by forgetting about their work. But intellectual and spiritual problems such as men of our type are supposed to be engaged in should normally be enjoyable at all times. I can see why the Torah advises Israel to speak of God's commandments (p.231) The upshot of all this is that I did not experience boredom for a single minute from the time I entered Karpf's home which was at 8:30 to the time he and his wife left me at the entrance to my house which was at 11:30.